

Hafa Adai!

Terms of 3 CCC commissioners to end next month. **PAGE 5**

Woman fears she'll never see her mother again. **PAGE 8**

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 55

www.saipantribune.com

THURSDAY MARCH 19, 2020

www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Guam has 3 more positive cases

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Guam now has a total of eight COVID-19 cases after three more persons tested positive for the coronavirus yesterday, according to a press release from the Guam Joint Information Center.

Also, beginning on March 22, all Manila flights of United Airlines will be suspended through May 3. According to a United Airlines statement yesterday, this includes the Manila to

Koror segment.

Separately, an internal memo purportedly shows the T Galleria by DFS Saipan announcing to its employees

See GUAM on Page 4

» **CNMI identifies temporary isolation centers**

OVERFLOWING GARBAGE

Staff of Rep. Joel Camacho (R-Saipan) helps clear out trash bins along beaches that were found overflowing with garbage. The legislator urges the community to help the Parks and Recreations Division of the Department of Lands & Natural Resources in keeping the islands clean by picking up trash and not leaving household trash in the beaches.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Public Masses cancelled for 9 days

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Diocese of Chalan Kanoa has cancelled public Mass in all churches on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota—from March 17 to 28—as part of guidelines to help prevent the potential outbreak of COV-

ID-19 in the Commonwealth.

This follows Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' Executive Order 20-04 last Sunday that declared the CNMI under a State of Significant Emergency and under Public Health Emergency.

Instead of public Masses, Mount Carmel Cathedral will be going on-

See MASSES on Page 4

DUE TO COVID-19 CONCERNS

Businesses revamp hours

By BEA CABRERA
beecabbie@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Several businesses are changing operating hours, doing take-outs and are closing temporarily following Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' Executive Order

2020-4 declaring a public health emergency in the CNMI.

Utility companies are giving its customers or subscribers more leeway or extra benefits while COVID-19 concerns remain prevalent.

See BUSINESSES on Page 4

Stocking up? Remember others when buying

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With people swarming supermarkets to stock up Sunday after Guam initially announced its three positive COVID-19 cases, Gov. Ralph DLG

Torres has appealed to the community to not panic and to shop only for what is needed.

Following the governor's declaration of the CNMI under a state of public health emergency and a continued

See STOCKING on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Grocers big and small are scrambling to restock shelves due to panic-buying.

PAGE 11



ASIA

Limited testing could mask the true extent of the COVID-19 outbreak in India.

PAGE 15



WORLD

Governments around the globe grapple with how to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

PAGE 16



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440

FAX: 235-3740

EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

MARIANAS CARRIER



Turn to the Experts.™



Products Offered:
Air Conditioner Units which are all Energy Savers!

GUALO RAI COMMERCIAL CENTER
P.O. BOX 503139, SAIPAN, MP 96950
TEL. NO: (670) 233-2665/(670) 233-0210 | FAX NO: (670) 233-2100
EMAIL: info@advancecarrier.com

We offer
Air Conditioner
Services to
both Residential
and Commercial
Customers that
are all Energy
Savers with
a high SEER
(the higher the
SEER rating,
the more energy
efficient the a/c)
We have as high
as 25 SEER

Local

'It's like a drought'

With the drastic slump in tourist arrivals due to the coronavirus pandemic, Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds compares what's happening to the CNMI economy right now to a drought.

"It's like a drought. I hope and pray for rain. And that's kind of where we are at," said King-Hinds in an interview last Thursday. Worse, people don't know how long this economic

crisis brought by coronavirus is going to last, she added.

"What we can do right now is to plan and to prepare, and to look at other areas who have been impacted by the spread of the virus," she said.

The virus may not be unique to the CNMI, but what is unique to the Commonwealth is the fact that the islands' economy is primarily driven by the tourism industry, she said, and it's difficult to plan when people don't know what type of resources they're going to have, whether it be medical or

finances, because everybody's impacted at this point.

She advised the community not to panic and just follow the health advisories and prepare their families.

"The new buzzword these days is 'what is social isolation?' Don't take anything for granted," she said.

CPA now estimates its total revenue loss at \$6.4 million, from the original projected loss of \$3.9 million.

Last Thursday, the CPA board of directors unanimously approved implementing a 64-hour work schedule for all employees effective March 29. **(Ferdie De La Torre)**

NMI Dems postpone events

Last Saturday, March 14, the NMI Democratic Party hosted its 2nd Presidential Caucus on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Of the 134 people who participated in the caucus, 84 selected presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders, 48 selected former vice president Joe Biden, and 2 voted "uncommitted." Sanders went on to receive four delegates while Biden received the remaining two. All three pledged Sanders candidates received a delegate seat to this year's Democratic National

Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from July 13 – 16.

Christian Punzalan, Stephen Woodruff, and Bertran Palacios are the three Sanders delegates and will meet to choose a fourth to join them. The pledged Biden delegates met immediately with their caucus counterparts after the nominee was announced to select their two delegates, which went to Ambrose Bennett and Marie Camacho, with Eloise Lopez as the alternate.

"Despite the challenges, I am proud the CNMI was able to participate in such a historic event. Bernie Sanders was the NMI's choice for President and the reason was because his supporters came out and voted—fair and square. When this race is over and whether it be Biden or Sanders, I am confident that either candidate will bring people together while being the best choice for America," said NMI Democratic Party chair Nola Kileleman Hix. "On behalf of the NMI Democratic Party, we would like to extend our appreciation to our supporters, voters, and volunteers who participated in our caucus event. We would also like to thank the staff and management of Saipan World Resort, [the Northern Marianas College] on Tinian and Rota for their assistance, to the Biden Campaign, and to Mr. Shannon Jackson from the Bernie Sanders campaign who flew in from the East Coast to participate in our event."

The Roadside Wave for Change scheduled for today, along with the Happy Hour Mixer scheduled for this Saturday, are both postponed until further notice. Upon request, ticket buyers can reach out to sellers for their refunds or call 484-3367(DEMS) for assistance.

"We ask our community for their patience and understanding during this challenging time and our prayers are with everyone affected by the COVID-19 pandemic," Hix added. **(PR)**



- **Please stay home** and avoid unnecessary travel as much as possible.
- **If you feel sick or if someone in your home is sick**, stay home. Do not go to work. Avoid social gatherings. Contact your personal doctor or call the **COVID-19 Info Line** at 285-1542, 285-1672, 285-1352, or 285-1854.
- **If you are an older person (man'amko)**, you are more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. Stay home and away from other people as much as possible.
- **If you are a person with a preexisting illness (such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease)**, you are more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. Stay home and away from other people as much as possible.
- **Work or do schoolwork from home** whenever possible and reasonable.
- **Avoid social gatherings** in groups of more than 10.
- **Avoid eating out** at restaurants, use drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options.
- **Continue practicing good hygiene:**
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Disinfect frequently used items (cellphones, computers, household items) as much as possible.

Source: Office of the Governor



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

For the next 30 days, we're making it easier for you to stay connected to things that matter most.

No data caps for mobile postpaid subscribers.
No disconnects nor late fees for 30 days.

Your **DOCOMO PACIFIC** Family



Playbook of priorities now in place

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With Guam now confirmed to have five COVID-19 cases, the CNMI COVID-19 task force has come up with what it describes as a “playbook of priorities” for the CNMI government to prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 in the CNMI.

In a meeting last Monday at the Governor’s Office, COVID-19 task force chair Warren Villagomez reassured that protocols are in place to ward off the possible entry

of the coronavirus into the CNMI. The meeting was also attended by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, members of the COVID-19 task force, and Commonwealth Health Care Corp. CEO Esther Muña.

According to Villagomez, the task force’s playbook of priorities ensures that schools have a system determining triggers for school closures, disinfection of schools, and making sure that any outbreak or potential case will be contained and minimized and not affect the 12,000 school population.

Other components of the playbook include lessening community events, discouraging social gatherings of more than 50 people, and practicing social distancing.

“We are continuing to work on enhancing the playbook of priorities to make sure that we work along with [Muna] on the mission that is coming out of CHCC,” said Villagomez.

Additionally, Villagomez said that the U.S. Department of Defense has already reached out to the task force to provide resources to go out and do an outreach to the community to reassure them.

Torres himself assured that

the task force is working to the best of its ability to keep the Northern Marianas safe. Protocols are in place at all ports of entry on Saipan to ensure that all arriving travelers, passengers, and cargo are being screened for COVID-19, he said.

“Please do not panic, [but] please do take the extra precautionary measures [such as] sanitation and avoid hand-shaking,” said Torres.

Torres pointed out that panicking and misunderstanding and/or absorbing wrong information won’t help in this critical situation. In addition, get your information

from reliable sources such as CHCC, the Governor’s Office, or the Centers for Disease Control, he added.

“We are here to tell you that we are 100% certain we are doing everything we can to prevent any outbreak in the CNMI,” said Torres. If and

when that happens, the playbook of actions are in place to guide the CNMI in moving forward.

Torres emphasized that the elderly and those with weak immune systems should stay home since they are more vulnerable to the virus.

Kilili to push supplemental package

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Having already introduced the \$100-million NMI Coronavirus Emergency Assistance Act in U.S. Congress in early March, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) is taking it up a notch to push for a coronavirus supplemental appropriation package that would help the Marianas even further.

Sablan has tagged five key areas that need to be addressed in the Marianas. These include the need for an infusion of funds for government operations in the Marianas, cash payments to laid-off workers,

support for industries that underlie tourism in all parts of the U.S., cover-over provisions in any tax credit-based relief, and coronavirus testing.

“The Marianas needs an infusion of funds for government operations,” he said.

According to Sablan, in addition or as a subset to the grant operations funding, there should be funding similar to the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to maintain local education programs.

“This funding avoids the long-term negative effects of students’ disrupted education

and puts money in teacher’s pockets,” Sablan added.

The delegate is also pushing for cash payments to workers who will be laid-off in the Marianas.

The U.S. House of Representatives, recently passed the Family First Coronavirus Response Act, which enhances unemployment insurance for those affected by the outbreak, but since there is no unemployment insurance in the Pacific territories, its provisions aiding laid off workers are not effective, according to Sablan.

Further, the act also includes a provision for a cover-over of U.S. Treasury funds to territorial governments for the cost of the tax

credit for sick leave paid to self-employed individuals.

Sablan is pushing for cover-over provisions in any tax credit-based relief provided in any coronavirus response legislation. According to the delegate, the territorial governments would otherwise be unable to meet the costs of these credits.

Last, procedures for COVID-19 testing of all congressional staff is being pushed in the supplemental appropriation package.

“It is important for the continuing function of Congress and health of members that procedures be put in place to test staff for the coronavirus,” Sablan added.

RENT NOW, WE ARE ON PROMO

Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Guam residents only.
PROMO VALID 'TIL MARCH 31, 2020

TOYOTA YARIS

\$29⁹⁵

COMPLETE PACKAGE. NO HIDDEN CHARGES.

- ✓ Vehicle rental fee
- ✓ CDW insurance coverage
- ✓ Tax and Surcharges



TOYOTA SIENNA

\$74⁹⁵

NISSAN ROGUE

\$44⁹⁵

TOYOTA COROLLA

\$34⁹⁵





www.nationalcarpacific.com | Email: saipan@nationalcarpacific.com

RESERVATION & RENTAL LOCATION

Saipan International Airport (670) 288-4400 | Grandvrio Hotel (670) 233-8339 | Garapan (670) 233-0110

Hotline: (671) 888-6055 • (670) 285-4405



**Payless SuperFresh
& Truckload Store**

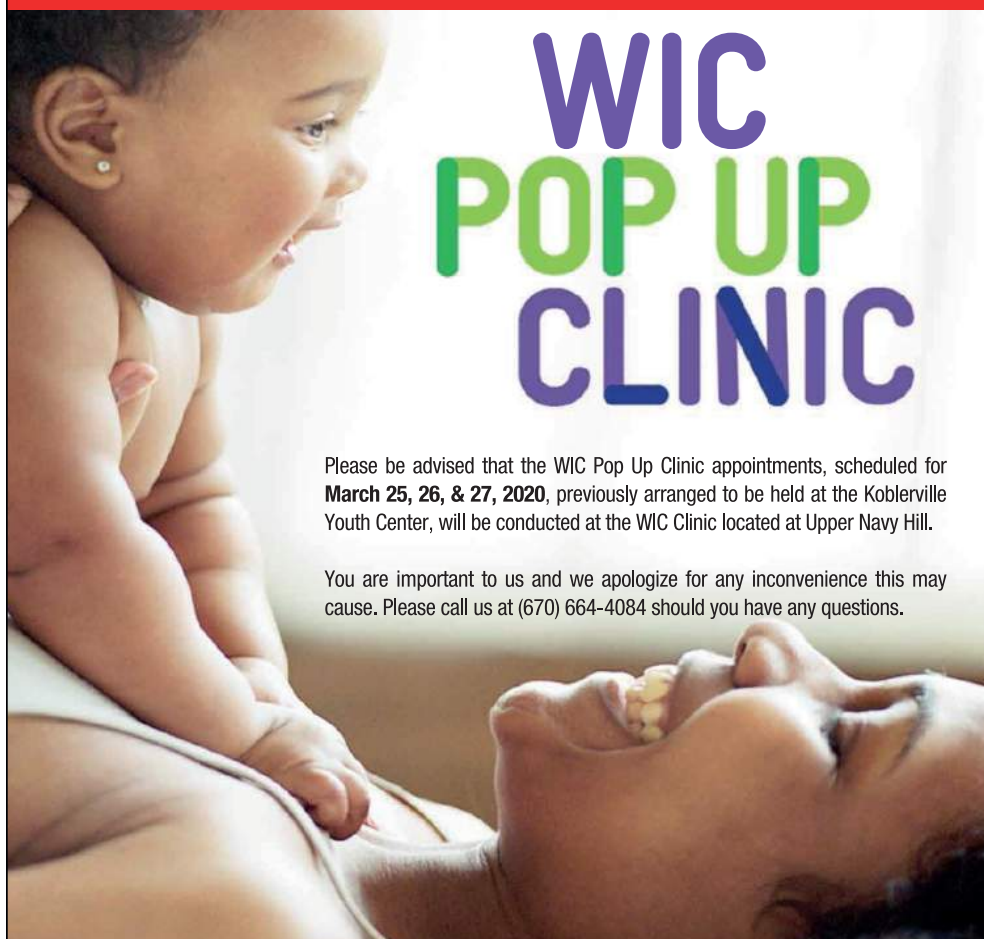
*Para i
Manamko'*

7AM-8AM

Tuesday & Wednesday

We will be open every Tuesday and Wednesday from 7am to 8am, for our manamko' customers (seniors 55 and over). Our staff are ready to serve and assist you in any way we can.

U P D A T E



WIC



POP UP

CLINIC

Please be advised that the WIC Pop Up Clinic appointments, scheduled for **March 25, 26, & 27, 2020**, previously arranged to be held at the Koblerville Youth Center, will be conducted at the WIC Clinic located at Upper Navy Hill.

You are important to us and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Please call us at (670) 664-4084 should you have any questions.

WIC provides healthy food, nutrition education, and breastfeeding guidance to more than 3,000 moms and children in the CNMI. If you are pregnant, a caregiver, or a mom with children under 5, you can get the right personalized support for you and your family.

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This project was supported by Grant 7NM700NM5 CFDA 10.557 from USDA and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC). The contents above are solely the responsibility of CHCC and do not necessarily represent the official views of USDA.

GUAM

From Page 1

that it will be temporarily closed effective March 22. “We will monitor the situation...to determine when [would be the best time] to reopen,” said the memo. The document could not be independently verified as of press time.

Also, the Facebook page of the Office of the Governor announced that a surveillance case that the CNMI sent to Guam last week for testing turned out to be negative.

As of March 18, 2020, the CNMI remains without a confirmed case of COVID-19.

According to a statement last night, the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services tested 20 individuals for COVID-19 and 17 tested negative. The results received Wednesday night confirm three additional positive cases. Guam DPHSS said all three new cases remain in isolation.

Guam has already performed a total of 65 tests from March 12, 2020, through March 18, 2020. To date, a

total of eight cases have tested positive and 57 cases have tested negative for COVID-19.

As part of the GovGuam’s coordinated COVID-19 response, DPHSS continues to trace back the recent contacts of the eight positive COVID-19 cases identified this week. This “contact tracing” investigation includes identifying close contacts of the individuals. That may include family members and co-workers who will be quarantined and actively monitored by DPHSS for 14 days after their last contact with the case.

Additionally, GovGuam has instituted COVID-19 Mandatory Quarantine Protocol measures for all incoming travelers from the Philippines. Any and all travelers arriving without these credentials will be subject to mandatory quarantine.

Temporary solation centers identified on Saipan

On Saipan, the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force has arranged for temporary isolation facilities through the business community. A press release from the Office of Governor said this was done to not compromise essen-

tial Commonwealth Health Center operations and to protect the limited resources of the Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

The press release also said that the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. has identified one person as a surveillance case and the person and his/her household members are now being monitored. The statement quickly pointed out that there is still no positive COVID-19 case in the CNMI and the patient is being monitored as a precautionary measure to protect the CNMI.

The statement said that the patient doesn’t necessarily meet the COVID-19 person under investigation criteria as defined by Guam Health Laboratory, which is the current testing location for potential COVID-19 cases in the CNMI, but a clinician has judged that the patient should be tested.

In addition, the patients don’t meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of a COVID-19 PUI (person under investigation).

In an effort to scale down community transmission, CHCC, following CDC guidelines and CNMI

legal authorities granted to CHCC, has decided to isolate this surveillance case and identify household members.

According to the CHCC statement, this decision was made in the best interest of protecting the island community.

COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC would like to remind the community to please respect these individuals as they remain quarantined at the Century Hotel in Garapan, where it will be a temporary isolation facility.

This does not mean that the CNMI has a confirmed case. Further information will be provided

when it is available.

United Airlines has also taken precautionary measures in order to prevent an outbreak in the CNMI. Instead of having twice a day flights from Guam to Saipan for seven days, it has been reduced to four weekly flights starting March 22 to May 3.

In a statement from United, it said, “United asks for your understanding of both the challenges we are facing and the difficult decisions we need to make to ensure that United can endure the current challenges and resume our normal service levels when passengers confidence and demand return.”

BUSINESSES

From Page 1

To give seniors an uncrowded shopping environment, Joeten Susupe Shopping Center will dedicate an hour of exclusive shopping time for senior citizens—those ages 60 and above—from 7am to 8am.

As of March 17, 2020:

OPEN AND OPERATING NORMAL HOURS

■ Exxon Mobil (All Mobil service stations)

OPEN BUT CHANGING OPERATING HOURS

(Based on a Saipan Chamber of Commerce list)

■ Paradise Dental Spa on Middle Road (670) 234-4040

■ Pacifica Insurance Underwriters Inc. in Susupe (670) 234-6267

■ 360 Revolving Restaurant Saipan located in Susupe (670) 234-3600

■ Bubba Gump Saipan in Garapan (670) 233-8593

■ Joeten Hafa Adai and Joeten Hafa Adai Deli in Garapan (670) 234-7596

■ Joeten Dandan/Aiko’s Deli in Dandan (670) 235-6018

■ Joeten Susupe/Aiko’s Deli in Susupe (670) 234-6446

■ Joeten Aiko’s Ramen in Oleai (670) 237-2176

■ Joeten Kagman in Kagman (670) 256-6442

■ Joeten Latte Café Saipan in Susupe, Dandan and Garapan

■ R&J Wine and Liquor in Garapan.

■ Herman’s Modern Bakery on Airport Road and Garapan (670) 234-1726

FOOD BUSINESSES OPEN FOR TO-GO/TAKE-OUT

(From Saipan Chamber of Commerce list)

■ Naked Fish Saipan in Garapan (670)- 235-3474

■ The Shack Saipan in Oleai (670) 286-74-22

■ McDonald’s Saipan in Chalan Laulau and Garapan; no dine-ins, only drive-thru.

■ Ina’s Kitchen in Puerto Rico (670) 488-1627

■ Taiwan Beef Noodle in Garapan (670) 233-2345

■ Poki Yaki along Middle Road (670) 233-9254

■ Salty’s Bar in Garapan (670) 233-7258

■ Cha Café in Garapan (Cha Bis- tro is closed) (670) 233-2421

■ American Pizza & Grill in Garapan (670) 233-1180

■ Hafa Adai Roasting Co. inside DFS T Galleria.

■ Caravan of Food in Garapan

CLOSURES

■ Hollywood Theaters/Regal Cinemas in San Jose is temporarily until further notice.

■ Kiki’s Clothing Store along Middle Road is temporarily closed until further notice

■ Loco Taco in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.

■ D&R Visuals in As Teo Drive is temporarily closed until further notice.

■ Imperial Pacific International in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.

■ Relox Bar in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.

■ Cha Bistro in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice. The Café, however, is open.

■ Gold’s Gym in Chinatown on Middle Road will be closed on March 18 to 19, 2020, for deep cleaning.

■ Cristiano’s Saipan that usually does business in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.

■ Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Susupe is temporarily closed until further notice.

■ The Garapan Street Market (Thursday Market) at the Garapan Fishing Base is temporarily closed until further notice.

■ Saturday Flea Market at the parking lot of the Marianas Business Plaza (formerly Nauru Building) is temporarily closed until further notice

■ True North Bar & Grill along Beach Road in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.

■ Marianas Creations along Micro Beach Road in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.

UTILITIES

■ IT&E pushed payment dues from every 15th of the month to the end of the month and no late fees will be applied. Data cap has been removed for all subscribers for the month of March.

■ Docomo Pacific is removing all data caps for anyone with a postpaid mobile plan and also offering payment graces. There will be no disconnections nor late fees imposed on any customer who may be going through financial hardship.

■ The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has given alternative payment options to customers. Pay bill online at www.cuc.gov.org or call toll free number 1-855-729-2282. Payments can also be made at Bank of Guam, Bank of Hawaii and Bank of Saipan.

MASSSES

From Page 1

line or have its Masses broadcasted live. Bishop Ryan Jimenez said that daily Masses will still be held daily, from 6am to 6pm, but without the congregation and streamed live via Facebook and aired on cable and radio.

A schedule for March 17 to 28 will be provided for the priests to preside and deacons to assist. All Mass intentions on Saipan will be offered at the cathedral. Rota and Tinian Masses will also be celebrated without the congregation.

Aside from the cancellation of public Masses, the diocese also ordered priests and deacons to self-quarantine for 14 days after returning from the Philippines for the clergy’s annual retreat.

He appealed to the Catholic faithful to pray as part of a traditional “spiritual communion,” when it is not possible to engage in a full Mass and receive the sacrament due to sickness or being homebound.

“This is considered a beautiful way to express to God our desires to be united with Him when we are unable to complete that union in the receiving of the Holy Communion,” the diocesan guidelines states.

The diocese said churches will continue to be open from 8am to 5pm for those wanting to still go. “Our Lady of Mt. Carmel highly encourages to practice social distancing when visiting the church. It is highly advised for those who are sick, the elderly, those in vulnerable conditions to stay at home and limit unnecessary movements.”

In case of a funeral, the guideline states that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommendation to not exceed 50 people in attendance must be followed.

This also goes for pre-scheduled weddings and baptisms that will occur from March 17 to 28. Social distancing will still be practiced by not having guests seated next to each other and by keeping some pews closed.

Today’s fiesta celebration at the San Jose parish in Oleai has also been cancelled. Instead, the fiesta Mass (mass without congregation) will be live-streamed via social media and radio. Santa Soledad and San Vicente fiestas will be announced later, according to the diocese.

Jimenez said the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine will be suspended from March 18 to April 14. CCD teachers will provide online resources to students. In addition, the Annual Diocesan Youth Gathering

on Palm Sunday, April 5, will also be cancelled.

Deacons Tony Tarobwemal and Stan Benavente will also be visiting the sick at the hospital and homes upon request. Communion given to the sick at home is temporarily suspended.

Jimenez said office hours at the Diocesan Curia and Cathedral Rectory will still remain the same at 8:30am to 5pm, with lunch break from 12pm to 1pm, except on the weekends for the Curia and except Sundays for the Cathedral Rectory. Parishioners are advised to minimize face-to-face contact and, instead, use the phone or email as primary points for information.

Jimenez also encourages those who can donate canned goods and non-perishable items to do so to Karidat Social Services. He said that requests for assistance from Karidat has increased due to many people who’ve lost their jobs.

“Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let us face this very complex and serious situation with calmness, vigilance, and a great sense of the common good,” Jimenez said.

Final arrangements for the activities for the weekend of March 28 to 29 and Holy Week will be available as soon as possible, the diocese noted.

does not help.”

Legislators have also appealed to the community to also remember others when buying anything.

Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan), for one, asked everyone to remember that one’s ability to maintain good health depend on everyone else’s ability to do so as well.

“When you shop, buy what you need and leave some for others. Be considerate. If you are a storeowner, please consider posting signs reminding people that shipping supply lines remain consistent so customers should only buy what they need,” she added.

The governor also said that the administration is in communication with the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard, and that the delivery of all

shipments that have been ordered are on time and on schedule.

Torres is also urging businesses to prioritize sanitation.

“For the businesses, obviously, we all share the same pain, but the priority is having sanitation for every customer that come to your business,” he said.

The Torres administration is also working with the Small Business Administration, with the governor sending a letter to ask SBA to look into the needs in the CNMI, given the pandemic, and how to move forward in addressing to assist all of the small businesses on the island.

President Donald J. Trump, during his declaration of a national emergency last Friday, has ordered SBA to provide economic loans in COVID-19 affected territories.

STOCKING

From Page 1

state of significant emergency, residents formed lines in stores to stock up on food items.

“Obviously, we’re trying to encourage our community, if you’re [going to] go [shopping], just shop for what you need, because the delivery of goods will continue to come at a normal pace,” Torres said during a KKMP interview last Tuesday.

“Do we have challenges? Of course. Are we concerned? Of course. [But] we shouldn’t be panicking [or be] in a panic mode because, no matter what that situation is, being in a panic mode—panicked family, panicked community [and] society—

CHCC: No surprise billing for COVID-19 testing

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As the U.S. await the fate of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which would facilitate free coronavirus testing for everyone—even for the uninsured—people in the CNMI can rely on the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. that they will get tested, following protocols in place.

While the CNMI remains

low risk, with no COVID-19 cases recorded, the administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has been treating the situation as high risk as early as January.

“Since Day 1, we’ve been aggressively making our health care a priority,” Torres said. “Fortunately, we don’t have one yet today. We are at low risk, that’s the fortunate part.”

The unfortunate part, ac-

cording to the governor, is that the virus has already spread to 49 American states, with a few territories or insular areas with positive COVID-19 cases as well.

This means that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services have these states and territories as priorities way ahead than the CNMI, given the virus being already there.

“The unfortunate [part] is that we have a long list of priorities of millions of millions of population before our 55,000. The good thing is we’re still at low risk, while we’re treating this as a high risk, and that’s an important part of our action moving forward,” Torres added.

Locally, CHCC has screening protocols to determine who needs to get tested, and is making sure that those who gets to be tested would not be met with a surprise billing fol-

lowing the COVID-19 test.

“The great model of CHCC is that we are a hospital but we’re also a public health department. Anyone that comes to CHCC, whether through the ER, through the hospital, our responsibility is public health,” CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña said. “We will make sure that no one comes with a surprise billing and saying, ‘oh, what happened here?’”

According to Muña, Medicare and Medicaid have waived

ers that, with President Donald J. Trump’s proclamation, allows Medicaid to pay for those that are covered, as well as Medicare. “There’s a way for the hospital to get reimbursed. But we may have to take a bite on some of those cases where the person is uninsured.”

As for test kits, Muña said that both CDC and HHS are working on adding more, whether through the private sector or through the Public Health in Guam, or even in the CNMI.

No school meals for now

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Public School System has decided against providing meals to students during the class suspension period because they are treating the current situation as if there is already a COVID-19 case in the CNMI.

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said the PSS Child Nutrition Program will suspend distribution of school meals to students to avoid putting students and others in danger.

“We decided to avoid that possibility. We are treating the situation as if it is already here. Everybody should be on lockdown at home and not going out to get their food,” he added.

He said the school principals and vice principals want

the meal distribution suspended until they can come up with safety procedures.

“Distributing food at designated schools sites may gather people in large numbers and expose the students to health risks,” Ada said.

He is confident that the federal grantors will understand PSS’ decision. “I am confident that the federal programs will loosen their policies, considering the situation that we are in,” he added.

During a special board meeting with the Board of Education last Tuesday on Capital Hill, Ada proposed the suspension of meal distribution but board members did not agree.

According to BOE vice chair Herman Atalig and member Phillip Mendiola-

Long, it is important that the meal distribution is done because many students, especially those on Tinian and Rota,

depend on those meals.

Mendiola-Long added that with the current economic crisis that parents are facing, the

food distribution would mitigate the stress on parents.

Ada said he and his team will revisit the idea to deter-

mine the best way to continue meal distribution for students without compromising the health of others.

Terms of CCC chair Sablan, 2 other commissioners to end next month

The six-year terms of all three Commonwealth Casino Commission commissioners from Saipan will end by next month.

CCC executive director Edward C. Deleon Guerrero said in a recent interview that the terms of CCC chair Juan M. Sablan and commissioners Joseph C. Reyes and Alvaro A. Santos will end on April 30. That means only two commissioners would be left: Ramon M. Dela Cruz of Tinian and Diego M. Songao of Rota. Both have four more years to serve.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres will have to appoint three commissioners from Saipan by May 1

in order for the commission to have quorum, Deleon Guerrero said.

Sablan, who was sworn into office in October 2014, said the past five years have been a very challenging but fruitful experience. In his letter to Torres last Thursday, Sablan said he has always been a supporter of the casino industry simply because he knew the potential it has to infuse revenue for the CNMI.

He said his goal since the start has been to ensure that the licensee, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, is compliant with CNMI laws. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

IT&E removes data caps and late fees for NMI subscribers

IT&E announced yesterday it is removing data caps for all its CNMI postpaid subscribers until March 31, 2020.

“As a community, we are all feeling the effects of the austerity measures. It’s important for us to help our subscribers in any way we can to stay informed and stay connected,” said Rose Soledad, general manager of IT&E.

This is in addition to cost-saving measures IT&E launched

on Feb. 28. These measures include paying bills any day during the month with no late fees.

In response to concerns over coronavirus, strict sanitization and hand-washing procedures are in place at all IT&E stores. For those that prefer not to visit, IT&E associates are available to help via phone at 682-4483. Phone purchases and bill payments can be made online at www.ite.net. *(PR)*

Do everything by phone or online!



Online Transactions

- Payments
- Purchase a phone
- Activate a new number (existing accounts only)
- Apply for internet or wireline services
- View current plans & promotions



Transactions by phone

- Payments
- Account inquiry or changes
- Purchase a phone
- Apply for internet or wireline services
- Activate a new number (existing accounts only)



You can also pay at other locations!

Bank of Guam • Bank of Saipan • Shell Stations • Payment Dropbox (located outside IT&E locations)



24/7 Online Chat Assistance

Visit store.ite.net/live-support/

ite.net [itecnmi](https://www.instagram.com/itecnmi) [itecnmi](https://www.facebook.com/itecnmi)



CLOSURES, CANCELLATIONS, SUSPENSIONS, ETC.

McDonald's amends operations

Our employee and customer safety and wellbeing remain our highest priority. This commitment guides all our actions and restaurant standards as we strive to safeguard our people and customers during this coronavirus outbreak.

To this reason, McDonald's dining rooms are currently closed. We'd be happy to serve you in our drive-thru or take out service. **(PR)**

SCC postpones golf tournament and scholarship program

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has postponed its scholarship golf tournament previously scheduled April 4 until further notice. Additionally, the Chamber has also postponed its scholarship program until further notice.

For all sponsors and registered players of the scholarship tournament, the Chamber will hold registration forms, payments, and donations. It hopes to reschedule the tournament in the summer months, and they will continue to monitor the community's health and wellness before announcing a new date of the tournament.

For more information, go to www.facebook.com/saipan-chamber or contact Franco Santos at 234-7150 or coordina-

tor@saipanchamber.com. **(PR)**

OVR closed for two weeks

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will be closed for two weeks starting last March 16, 2020, in compliance with Executive Order 2020-04 (declaration of state of public health emergency on COVID-19), and as a precautionary measure.

Be advised that all appointments and schedules of meetings and trainings with OVR counselors or staff will be cancelled and rescheduled. Your counselor or caseworker will be contacting you as soon as information regarding the reopening of the OVR office is received.

"We know that there have been many concerns for the health and welfare of older adults and people with disabilities as well as yourself, people in your family, the community and the workplace regarding COVID-19. While the immediate risk of infection with COVID-19 for many in the CNMI is low since there are no confirmed cases, protecting the health and safety of at-risk populations is important to us all, therefore preventative measures are critical," said the agency in a statement.

OVR would like to share a resource on COVID-19 developed by Green Mountain Self-advocates for individuals with

ID/DD. This resource is an eight-page booklet about the coronavirus written in plain language. It was created by and for people with developmental disabilities. It focuses on "need to know" information: <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plain-Language-Information-on-Coronavirus.pdf>. We ask that you share these resources with your friends and family. Below are links that may be useful for employers and businesses when questions arise in the workplace.

■ <https://www.chcc.gov.mp/coronavirusinformation.php>

■ <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3989.pdf>

■ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>

With the evolving nature of COVID-19, we will provide updates as they are available. We encourage you to use credible resources to regularly check for real-time updates. Thank you ALL for your understanding and support during our challenging times. Together we will all get through this, we will continue to be Marianas Strong. **(PR)**

Rescheduled traffic cases

The CNMI Office of the Clerk of Court, Superior Court would like to notify individuals with traffic citations, cases

pursuant to a court order issued by Associate Judge Roberto C. Naraja, that were initially scheduled, are rescheduled for:

■ March 19, 2020, rescheduled to April 23, 2020

■ March 26, 2020, rescheduled to May 7, 2020

All parties with traffic citation(s) scheduled for hearing (arraignment) during the following date will be held at the Supreme Court courtroom at the Guma Hustisia.

For additional information, contact the Office of the Clerk of Court at telephone number 234-4253, 783-8417, or 783-8522. **(PR)**

SFA cancels Mahi Mahi Derby

The Saipan Fishermen's Association wishes to announce the cancellation of the annual Mahi Mahi Fishing Derby, which was scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2020. The SFA is taking this measure to help contain the situation of the COVID-19 virus.

There are no cases of the coronavirus in the Marianas and by taking extra precautions such as the cancellation of these events, the SFA is hopeful that the annual derbies will take place in the near future.

"The SFA is aware of the state of public health emergency declared by our local government, as well as the impact on a global scale," said SFA president Gene Weaver.

"These are challenging times for all of us and we do recognize the importance of staying strong as a community," added SFA vice president Tony Scragg.

For more information, log on to the SFA website at sfacnmi.com or call SFA officers at 483-4363 or 483-4597. **(PR)**

Amended hours at landfill, transfer station

The Solid Waste Management Division is amending the hours of operation of the Marpi landfill & Lower Base transfer station, effective March 23, 2020, until further notice. Both sites will be open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, from 7:30am to 11am only. Closed on Wednesday. **(PR)**

USCIS closing offices to the public March

MARCH SPECIAL!
3BR 2BA & 4BR 2BA
1st Month Rent Free!!!
Free Washer & Dryer
Rent starting
at \$746/mo
Section 8 accepted
Move in ready
CALL TODAY!
588-7746 / 285-4745
Isa Villas 1
Corner of Guguan St.
Anatahan St. Capitol Hill

18-April 1

Effective yesterday, March 18, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is suspending in-person services at its field offices, asylum offices and Application Support Centers to help slow the spread of coronavirus disease, OVID-19. This suspension of services will be effective until at least April 1. In the meantime, USCIS will provide limited emergency services. Call the Contact Center for assistance with emergency services.

USCIS field offices will send notices to applicants and petitioners with scheduled appointments and naturalization ceremonies impacted by this closure. USCIS asylum offices will send interview cancellation notices and automatically reschedule asylum interviews. When the interview is rescheduled, asylum applicants will receive a new interview notice with the new time, date and location of the interview. When USCIS again resumes normal operations, USCIS will automatically reschedule ASC appointments due to the office closure. You will receive a new appointment letter in the mail. Individuals who had InfoPass or other appointments must reschedule through the USCIS Contact Center once field offices are open to the public again. Please check to see if your field office has been reopened before reaching out to the USCIS Contact Center.

Education and precautions are the strongest tools against infection. Get the latest facts by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 website. Continue to practice good health habits, refrain from handshakes or hugs as greetings, and wash hands and clean surfaces appropriately.

USCIS will provide further updates as the situation develops and will continue to follow CDC guidance. Visit uscis.gov/coronavirus for updates. **(PR)**

AMP amends operations; closes visitor center

The American Memorial Park is announcing modifications to operations to implement the latest guidance from the White House, Centers for Disease

Control & Prevention, and local and state authorities to promote social distancing.

As of yesterday, March 18, 2020, the park visitor center is closed until further notice. All educational programs and special events are postponed until further notice. Permits for large gatherings will also not be issued. Where it is possible to adhere to the latest health guidance, visitors may continue to enjoy Micro Beach, the memorials, walking paths, tennis courts and open spaces in the park.

"The health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners at American Memorial Park is our number one priority," said the National Park Service, which runs the park, in a statement yesterday.

It said that NPS is working with the federal, state, and local authorities to closely monitor the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, situation. "We will notify the public when we resume full operations and provide updates on our website and social media channels."

NPS urges visitors to do their part when visiting a park and to follow CDC guidance to prevent the spread of infectious diseases by maintaining a safe distance between yourself and other groups; washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze; and most importantly, staying home if you feel sick.

For high-risk populations, such as the elderly and people with underlying conditions, we ask that they take extra caution and follow CDC guidance for those at higher risk of serious illness.

Updates about NPS operations will be posted on www.nps.gov/coronavirus. Check nps.gov/amme for specific details about park operations or follow @americanmemorial-park. **(PR)**

US District Court entry protocols

■ If you have traveled outside the CNMI within the last 14 days;


■ Or if you have had close contact with someone who has traveled outside the CNMI within the last 14 days;

■ Or if you've been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital or health agency;

■ Or if you've been diagnosed with, or have had contact with, anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

■ Or if you have a fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, or flu symptoms, within the last 72 hours;

Advise the court security officer prior to entering the screening area. You will be denied entry and provided written instructions on what to do next. **(PR)**



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CUC-IFB-19-036, REV. 1

MANNED SECURITY and ELECTRONIC MONITORING SERVICES

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), Office of the Executive Director is soliciting competitive bids from qualified firms to provide Manned Security and Electronic Monitoring Services for various sites at CUC, Saipan and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **\$100.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set. If you have previously purchased CUC-IFB-19-036, no purchase is needed but will still have to register in order to receive the package.

Contractors must provide proof of "Indemnity Liability Insurance," specifically covering security workers assigned to CUC's compound. Coverage must be a minimum of \$200,000.00. The Contractor shall agree to and indemnify and hold CUC harmless from and against all liability, loss, damage or injury, and all cost and expenses (including attorneys' fees and costs of any suit related thereto) suffered or incurred by the Cooperative, arising from or related to Contractor's negligent performance under the contract.

Proponents shall provide a certification signed by a principal of the company stating that the company is currently in full compliance with all applicable CNMI and Federal Labor Laws and has been for the past Five (5) years. Proponents shall submit a listing of all of its employees (US & Foreign) with corresponding job titles and a certification of good standing from the CNMI Department of Labor. Failure of the company to provide the certification is grounds to reject the entire Bid.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-19-036-Rev.1, Security Guard Services", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST, Saipan Time) on April 14, 2020.** Late submissions of Bids will not be considered.

This Invitation for bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of Bid in anticipation of a contract. This Request and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. All responses to this Invitation for bids should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the Proponent, awarded a contract.

All Proponents are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proponents due to lack of information or understanding of the Bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a Bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST, Saipan Time) on March 25, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to John Mafnas, CUC Contracting Specialist via email address john.mafnas@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC P&S, Purchasing Technician, Senior – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Looking to hire Operators and Skilled Labor (Carpenters, Masons, Steelmen) Rate to range from \$14 to 18 per hour, dependent on experience Assistance with Transportation and Accommodation Available

Send resumes to
melanie.santos@lmsfm.com
 Office: 202 Hilton Road B01
 Tumon, Guam 96913

LMS is an Equal Opportunity Employer

NMPASI to remain closed until March 27

The Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. was closed starting yesterday, March 18, and until at least March 27 or until further notice is in response to the COVID-19 threat.

"Due to concerns regarding potential spread of COVID-19 and to heed local and federal emergency declarations we are taking the following precautionary measures to protect our staff, clients, and other members of our community at large especially those known to be most vulnerable to the virus," NMPASI said in a statement.

NMPASI said they have asked their staff to work from home and to limit time spent in the office in accordance with an established schedule disallowing more than 50% of the staff in the office for any

more than 50% of the time.

"Our staff will not participate in any in-person meetings at our office or other locations. We will use email, telephone, video conferencing and other means to communicate with clients and other partners within the community," it added.

While their office will be closed to the public, NMPASI said their phone lines will remain open during regular work hours Monday-Friday. Staff will respond in accordance with in-house directives.

NMPASI added that any staff speaking engagements and/or travel (including travel to Tinian and Rota) are suspended until further notice.

"We urge everyone in the community to continue taking precautionary measures in accordance with guidance

from health officials to include proper hand washing, social distancing, and more. Please bear in mind that our population of people with disabilities may be facing some unique challenges and other disability rights situations as a result of this pandemic," it said.

"We will continue to monitor this unprecedented and rapidly evolving situation and provide updates as to any changes to our timelines or specifics on these preventative measures," NMPASI added.

NMPASI is the state-designated protection and advocacy agency for individuals with disabilities in the CNMI. For further information, please contact us at (670) 235-7273/4 [voice], 235-7275 [fax] or on-line via www.nmpasi.org. **(PR)**

'Social distancing' enforced at CUC Customer Center

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has implemented "social distancing" as recommended by the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at its Customer Center, encouraging and expecting customers to adhere to a six-foot distance between each other. All customers will be assisted by a CUC employee from a window. There will be no assistance provided from the cus-

tomers' booths for that matter.

Only 10 customers at a time will be allowed inside CUC's Customer Center or as permitted at the CUC Rota and Tinian branches to transact necessary business. Customers will also be asked to hand sanitize upon entering the center.

Please do not arrive with other members of your family or friends that will not be transacting business with CUC. They will not be al-

lowed inside.

CUC encourages you to make your payment online at CUC's website, www.cucgov.org, or at Bank of Guam, Bank of Saipan, and Bank of Hawaii branch. You can also pay by phone by calling toll free 1-855-729-2282 (1-855-PAY-2CUC). Partial payments are now accepted online or by phone and there are no fees at this time. A debit or credit card is required. **(PR)**

EEOC lawyer cancels Saipan travel in lawsuit vs IPI

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Honolulu-based lawyer of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, has canceled a scheduled travel to Saipan for a conference in connection with the agency's sexual harassment and sex discrimination lawsuit against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC and Imperial Pacific International Holdings Limited.

Eric Yau and IPI counsel Kelley Butcher instead jointly asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI on Monday to hold the case management conference via telephone.

Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted the request and pushed through with the case management conference

that was set last Tuesday.

In the parties' request, Yau cited the imposition of 14-day self-isolation for all arriving passengers on Saipan as the reason for the cancellation of his scheduled travel to Saipan, saying he can no longer personally appear for the case management conference as planned.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres announced the self-isolation rule last Sunday in response to discovery of coronavirus cases in Guam.

Yau said he discussed this contingency with Butcher and that both of them jointly asked the district court to appear via telephone at the conference.

Yau and Butcher cited Torres' Facebook messages last Sunday in which the governor

stated that they will be asking individuals, regardless of travel history, who were off-island for work or travel, to self-quarantine themselves for at least 14 days.

Torres also stated that they will be working with department heads and private sector partners in implementing this immediately.

Last Monday, Manglona issued an order limiting access to the courthouse and reducing court's operations due to the coronavirus pandemic.

EEOC is suing IPI for allegedly subjecting some female VIP service hosts to unwelcome physical and verbal sexual harassment by IPI casino's male patrons known as high rollers. IPI has denied the allegations.

Payment options and loan deferments for NMIRF borrowers

Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund borrowers and debtors on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan will be offered various payment solutions during this time of global health and economic impact.

The options are as follows:

1. **Loan revision:** Will help provide lower monthly payments and interest rate. This will be available to members who have not already availed previously to this option.

2. **Payment deferment:** Bor-

rowers may defer loan payments for up to three months. However, NMIRF borrowers and debtors are required to notify NMIRF of their request to avail of the deferment by filling out an Allotment form. NMIRF Allotment forms can be found in the forms section of the finance.gov.mp web page.

3. No interest will accrue for 90 days beginning April 1, 2020, for all loans. If borrowers and debtors choose to make payments during the

loan deferment period, all payments will be applied to the principal loan balance.

4. For loans that are delinquent for more than 30 days, this offer on loan payment deferral will not cure the delinquent amounts owed.

Should you have any question contact NMIRF program manager Velma Palacios via email atvc.palacios@dof.gov.mp or at (670) 664-1100 when government office resumes normal business hours. **(PR)**



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK • Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Telephone: (670) 664-4282 • Facsimile: (670) 235-5131



PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold a Special Board meeting on Monday, March 23, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building to consider the following agenda. Public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA*

- I. Preliminary Matters
 - A. Call to Order
 - B. Roll Call
 - C. Reading of the Notice of the Agenda
 - D. Adoption of Agenda
 - E. Correspondence
- II. Old Business
 - A. Telesource Contract
- III. New Business
 - A. Proposed FY 2021 Operations and Personnel Budget
 - B. Impact of Corona Virus on CUC Operations
 1. Ongoing Cost Cutting Measures
 2. Preparedness
 3. Reduction-in-Force/Austerity
 - C. Contracts and RFPs
 - D. Stipulated Order 1 and Stipulated Order 2
- IV. Public Comments**
- V. Executive Session***
(Consultation with Legal Counsel on Personnel Matters, Contracts, and Board Communications)
- VI. Adjournment

* Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Agenda maybe modified during the meeting.

** Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.

*** Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board of Directors may vote to meet in executive session at any time.



Bank of Saipan

PUBLIC NOTICE

**The Bank of Saipan
Annual Shareholders Meeting
scheduled for Saturday,
March 21, 2020,
is postponed until
further notice.
Please call 235-6260
for any questions.**

For more information, please call Bank of Saipan at 235-6260/1/2

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 55

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Hoarding won't save you but it will endanger others

A crisis reveals our core values and beliefs. When a tornado or hurricane strikes, some of us donate to charities, put our shoulders to clearing away the rubbish and help victims in our midst sift through the unimaginable chaos for the cherished memories of a lifetime.

So what is it in our psyche that drives many of us in the midst of the uncertainty of the coronavirus to empty grocery shelves with the feeding frenzy of a school of piranhas? It is one thing to be prepared; it is quite another to hoard. And why is toilet paper seemingly the most valuable item for panicked shoppers?

Psychologists suggest that stockpiling gives people a sense of control when they otherwise feel powerless. We would add that a lack of public leadership at the highest levels only feeds public panic. When it looks like those in charge don't have a handle on the problem, more than a few people will do the only thing within their power—stockpile for the uncertain times ahead.

The problem comes when this goes beyond good planning and feeds irrational behavior. That causes shortages for everyone else, and creates particularly acute problems for those of meager means who can't buy much in advance. So we'd add that all of us have the opportunity to lead ourselves and make good decisions for our families and our communities by buying what we need, not filling every inch of the hall closet with goods we'll never use.

We appreciate that the White House on Sunday told the American people that grocery stores will remain open. That's a message that needs to be repeated to quell panic buying.

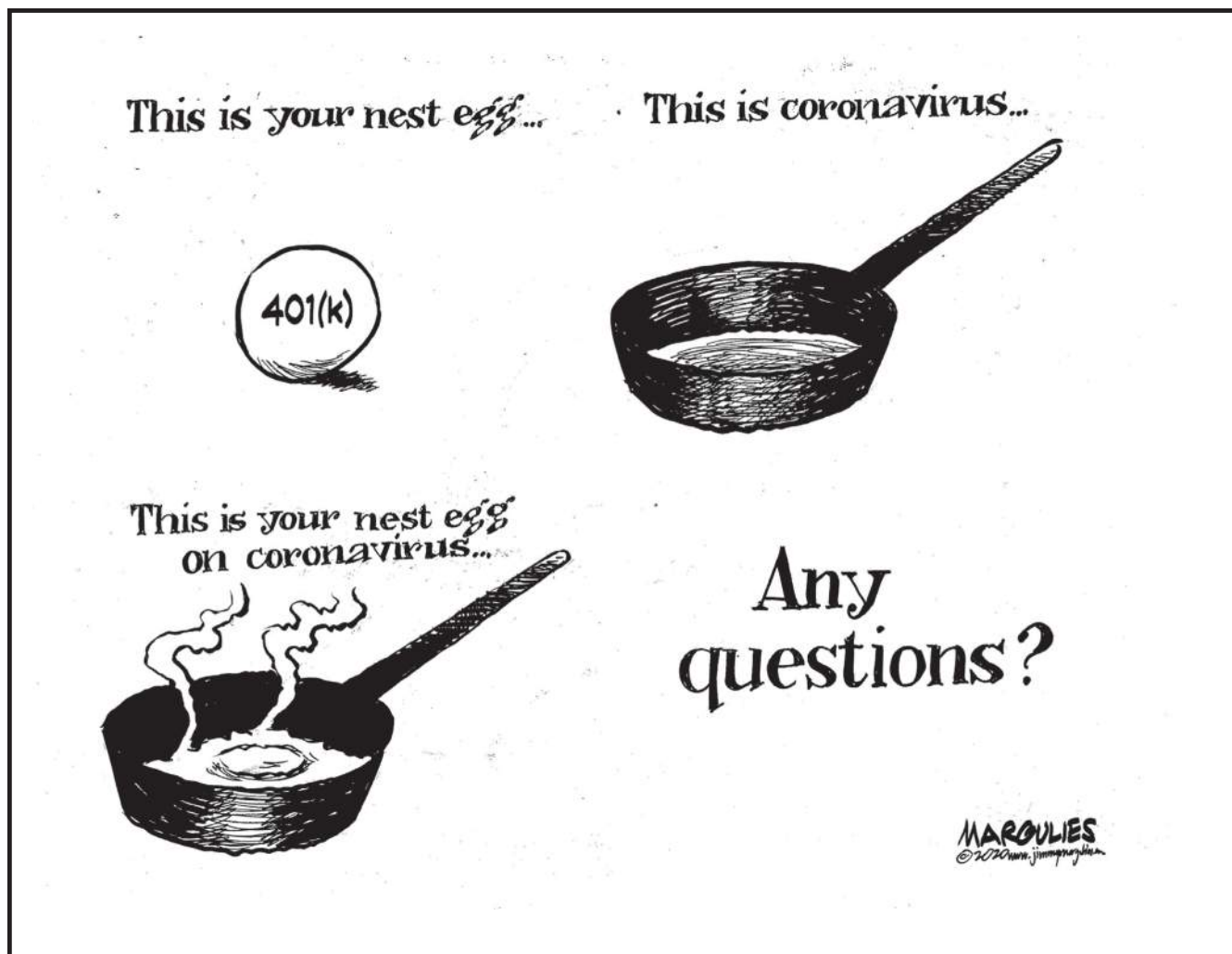
There have been other times in our history when we have faced challenges that changed our lives, and as a nation we have emerged on the other side. During World War II, the nation survived mandatory rationing for the greater good of allocating resources to the war effort. The quaint patriotic notion of what you do impacts others united the nation.

In many ways, we live in a different world. Generations of families used to live in the same community, if not the same house, providing a psychological cushion that comes with sharing and working together to rise above a crisis. Now we often live in isolation in our communities, not knowing or trusting our neighbors, or even knowing their names or what they do for work.

Also, we as a nation have lost the ability to make and fix things with our hands; many of us can't cook so we are reliant on others and become fearful when our comfortable options are placed in doubt. Our politics also reinforce isolation, from lawmakers who can't cross the political aisle to break bread, to the growing sentiment that we can wall off ourselves indefinitely from the rest of the world.

We can make it through this if we follow some simple rules. Buy what you need, but don't hoard. Grocery stores

See **HOARDING** on Next Page



Woman fears she'll never see her mother again

How quickly it happened. How quickly we lost the chance to touch certain people we love, to hold a hand, to give a hug, to wipe away a tear. Suddenly this new virus named COVID-19 marauds across the land, and, just like that, everything is changed. Trips to see friends and family are canceled. Weddings are postponed. Funeral gatherings are called off. Jobs vanish.

This too shall pass, we tell ourselves, and it will.

But before it does, many people will face losses that had never crossed their minds and that may never be repaired? Sue Markgraf is among them.

On Saturday, Markgraf went to visit her 81-year-old mother, who is a memory care patient in hospice in Joliet, south of Chicago. For the past 2½ months, Markgraf has driven from her home in Mundelein almost every evening to sit by her mother's side. She helps her mother do the crossword puzzle, tucks the afghan around her mother's shoulders when it slips off, chats with her mom about kids, grandkids, ancestors.

The facility—Sunny Hill Nursing Home of Will County—is excellent, Markgraf says. "It's clean, it's fun. The care my mother gets there is good."

But a few days ago, Markgraf learned what she had feared: With the coronavirus spreading, visits would be restricted. Saturday's would be her last one for a while and maybe, given her mother's condition, forever.

Befuddled. That's one word she uses to describe her response to the decree. Another word is mad.

"It would be so much easier for me if there was somebody to be mad at," she says. "There's nobody to be mad at. No one is responsible for this. It's a virus. I'm mad at a virus that's dark and scary."

Markgraf knows she's not alone. Many facilities for the elderly—the population most at risk of dying from the virus—have enforced similar restrictions in the past few days, and while those restrictions have good reasons, they've left Markgraf and many others afraid that they'll never see their elderly parents again, and fearful that their parents will feel abandoned.

"I understand the restrictions," Markgraf says. "But it's heartbreaking. I don't know what the right answer is. I just know that she's my mom. In our hearts, we're all children. We suffer anyway when a parent is ill. But add this restriction ..."

Her voice trailed off.

"I have never felt pain like this in my life. This is a grief."

Markgraf's mother, Wanda Johnson, is a vivacious woman who married her husband, Jerry, 60 years ago and raised four children, all of whom visit her regularly. In the 1950s, she

By **MARY SCHMICH**
Chicago Tribune

Mary Schmich is a columnist for the Chicago Tribune and winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for commentary.



worked as a private secretary at Argonne National Laboratory. Later she managed the books for her husband's grocery stores. It wasn't so long ago that she liked to sit on her seated walker in her own apartment folding laundry.

But a stroke, followed by complications, changed her life. Now her legs don't work and she spends her time in the nursing home either in a big wheeled chair or in bed. She has trouble remembering things, such as her daughter Sue's phone number, which she'd known for years.

"My mother was a wizard at accounting," Markgraf says. "But now if you were to give her a mobile phone, she wouldn't know what to do with it."

On Saturday, Markgraf, along with one of her sisters, sat with her mother in the nursing home. Her dad was there. They told Wanda they wouldn't be able to visit for a while.

"She wanted to know why," Markgraf says. "She's a memory care patient so she's not understanding the true why. We told her it was a virus worse than the flu. She just looked stunned. She said, 'So I'm not going to see my family at all?' We told her we'd be in touch with her. She said, 'Do I have a say in this?' And we said, 'No, none of us do.'"

In the time since, Markgraf keeps thinking of her dad saying, "I just want to hold my wife's hand again." She keeps wondering if there's a better way for nursing homes to handle this impossible situation. She doesn't know what it is. (I left a couple of messages at Sunny Hill, hoping to discuss the challenges they're facing, but didn't get a call back.)

Markgraf runs a strategic communications firm and believes that communication is vital to managing this crisis. At the very least, she believes, care facilities need to focus on communicating, thoroughly and often, with the families of the people they care for. They have to find ways to ensure that patients stay in contact with their families.

In her mother's home, she says, landlines are in short sup-

See **WOMAN** on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Cash is what Americans need now to make it through this crisis

By **EBONY SCOTT AND AMEYA PAWAR**

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The coronavirus pandemic is shining a spotlight on what most already knew: There are giant gaps in our economic system and disasters aren't status levelers. This pandemic is being exacerbated by deeply embedded economic inequities.

We know that only 4 in 10 people have \$400 for an emergency and a large percentage of Americans live check to check. With new social distancing measures in place, millions of people will be out of work for extended periods. For these reasons we are demanding bold solutions from our city, state and federal government to stabilize communities. We must act fast—today—and give our friends and neighbors what they really need now: cash.

Cash transfers—a measure the Trump administration indicated Tuesday it would pursue—aren't a new idea. Each year, over 22

million American families and individuals receive the earned income tax credit, a cash rebate tied to employment. In 2008, President George W. Bush's Economic Stimulus Act cut \$152 billion in checks to everyday Americans to stimulate consumer spending.

Over the years academics have conducted nearly 200 research studies on these efforts, and all draw the same conclusion: Cash transfers are cost-effective and have the strongest track record to reduce vulnerability. A local unconditional cash transfer program—one that is not tied to work—is an important solution for many of our neighbors who are stretching food, baby formula and other necessities or those experiencing housing insecurity.

A recent report by the New York Times shows the serious implications of the coronavirus on industry. Illinoisans who work in food service, entertainment and hourly wage positions have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss of income, and the potential loss of their jobs in the long term. We've seen a few employers step up and say they will pay their hourly workers, as the owners of the Chicago Blackhawks and Bulls are doing for workers at the United Center. This is a welcome start and more businesses should step up in similar ways. However, the government needs to do the same. Simply calling for the private sector to do more will not cut it this time.

According to recent estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of COVID-19 cases will grow dramatically in the coming days. Based on what we've

seen in Spain and Italy, the world is going to be a different place within two weeks. This means we not only need to get cash to people, we need to do it safely.

Food banks, social service providers and churches will continue to deliver services and serve as our front line. But placing the bulk of responsibility on service providers increases the risks for their staff and volunteers. A technology-backed cash transfer program can get cash safely to those who have access and serve as a triage function for service providers.

Every family situation is unique, and now is not the time to fall back on a funding orthodoxy that prioritizes programs over individual agency. A family that is staring into a bare pantry, an overdrawn bank account or the prospect of taking care of a loved one knows exactly what they need to do now to be safe two weeks from now. Through cash transfers we can provide people the agency and dignity they deserve, while saving lives.

Let's not look back and realize we could have done more to support one another.

Ebony Scott is the Chicago director of the Family Independence Initiative. Ameya Pawar is a senior fellow with the Economic Security Project and a Leadership in Government Fellow with the Open Society Foundations. Both are members of the Illinois Cash Coalition.

Kids and COVID-19: Why they are not getting as sick

Children are not immune to COVID-19. They are getting infected with the disease and can spread it, but they do not get as sick as adults. Dr. Nipunie Rajapakse, a Mayo Clinic pediatric infectious diseases specialist, offers some insight as to why.

"There is some interesting information about kids and this new coronavirus," says Dr. Rajapakse. "Theories about why kids are not getting as sick have to do with their exposure to other coronaviruses, such as the common cold, and their immune systems."

No one is immune

"We know that no-one is immune to it, because this is a novel, or new, virus that we haven't been exposed to in the past. So we don't think anyone has preexisting immunity to it."

Theories

"Kids who have been found to be infected seem to be having mild, if any illness at all, related to the infection," says Dr. Rajapakse. "One theory is we know that there are other coronaviruses that circulate in the community and cause the common cold. And because kids frequently get colds, there is some thought that maybe some of those antibodies are providing them with some protection to this coronavirus."

"The other thing is there might be a way that kids' immune systems interact with this virus that is different than what we're seeing in some of the older adults or people who are having more severe illness," says Dr. Rajapakse.

"An additional factor may relate to the fact that kids are much less likely to have other underlying health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, lung disease or weakened immune systems than older adults," says Dr. Rajapakse. "These underlying diseases seem to be an important risk factor for developing more severe and complicated illness in adults. So far, there have been very limited reports on how children who have some of these underlying medical conditions have done when they have gotten infected, and they are a group that we need to learn more about quickly." (*Mayo Clinic News Network*)

HOARDING

From Page 8

are continuing to restock shelves and there is no indication that those supply chains are at any risk of shutting down. Grocers wisely are beginning to limit purchases of toilet paper and certain other items to make sure that available product doesn't end up mostly in the hands of panic buyers or profiteers.

The coronavirus poses a serious health threat for older Americans and those who have underlying health conditions. Americans will have to make adjustments to lifestyles and plan differently. Planning is good; hoarding that creates artificial shortages isn't.

(c)2020 The Dallas Morning News

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'We're all in this together'

No one can envy the hard choices that Commonwealth leaders and residents must make in the face of this deadly viral threat and ensuing economic decline but choices must be made.

It is evident that the government cannot meet its financial obligations and cuts must be made. Clearly federally funded programs and salaries should be exempted because we need every dollar circulating in the economy, and the governor's effort to add more employees under that umbrella is a good move.

Even though every employee is important, there is a hierarchy of needs, and this must be protection of person and property. Under this scenario, health and public safety employees, customs and revenue, border, ports, utilities, correctional facilities and essential personnel from the courts must be funded in full or in part, but the services must be provided uninterrupted to protect the greater public interest.

The longer the virus lingers in our region, the longer the threat remains, the harder it will be for the government to cover essential and emergency services and institutional obligations under our current fiscal condition.

Doctors, nurses and technicians, billing and record keeping must continue unaffected by budget cuts. Arguably, the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. must be given more money to plan for the onslaught of the coronavirus. Experts have concluded that containment is the byword. In this regard, Gov. Torres' first decision to close air and port traffic to China where the virus first appeared was the correct decision. Football games and campaign activities have been cancelled and schools closed in an effort to contain the virus; even Japan is considering a schedule change for the Olympics.

Several countries have closed borders and cities are in lockdown in an effort to contain the coronavirus, for which there is no medicinal protection yet. Several key questions are critical to ask among ourselves and in government ranks over and over again as the situation is fluid. How many test kits have been allocated to the CNMI and do we have them on-hand? How many isolation rooms does the Commonwealth Health Center have?

Which hotels or schools have been identified to accommodate overflow? Do we have enough doctors, nurses, medicines, equipment to handle the spread of the virus in the CNMI? Are the private clinic physicians and staff on-call and are those clinics available to handle the overflow? How many respirators/ventilators does the hospital have and how many are needed? Do we have enough blood on hand and is our access to supply open? Where do our emergency patients go when we've reached critical mass and airline flights into and out of the CNMI have been curtailed? Health costs, public safety expenses are likely to be covered by federal emergency funding, not so other expenses so if it becomes a question of where local available monies should be spent, federal funding considerations should be a big deciding factor.

There are conflicting needs in a crisis and many pressures so government officials will be pressed by some business community members to approve a marathon, for example, but it is the government that will have primary responsibility for the community care if the virus should take hold here. If we are lucky, no harm will come to us but future decisions must weigh the real ability of the CNMI to handle an epidemic against our best wishes for a good outcome. In these conditions, the risk may just outweigh the benefit of having reported 300-plus runners brought in to a community that is so far unaffected by the virus.

The questions of what we as a community will need to do to recover from this combination of horrible events is one we must continue to address so the idea of exploring new business opportunities abroad is a good one—in a few months. Bank of Hawaii has announced a three-month deferral for mortgage and other loans so businesses are stepping up to the challenge and the rest of us are encouraged to do what we can to minimize the impact of this crisis.

Right now it appears that no other emergency declarations are needed but hard decisions will continue to emerge and it is critical that the right choices are made. This letter is intended to engage in a reasonable and more robust conversation about our ability to handle the viral threat given our remote location and the constraints that come with this fact. We're all in this together. And the public must plan for the worst and hope for the best, and stand together to be of assistance when and if and when the time comes.

Juan S. Tenorio ("Santiago")

Airport Road, Dandan

WOMAN

From Page 8

ply, but many people, like her mother, can't handle a cellphone, much less figure out a FaceTime call.

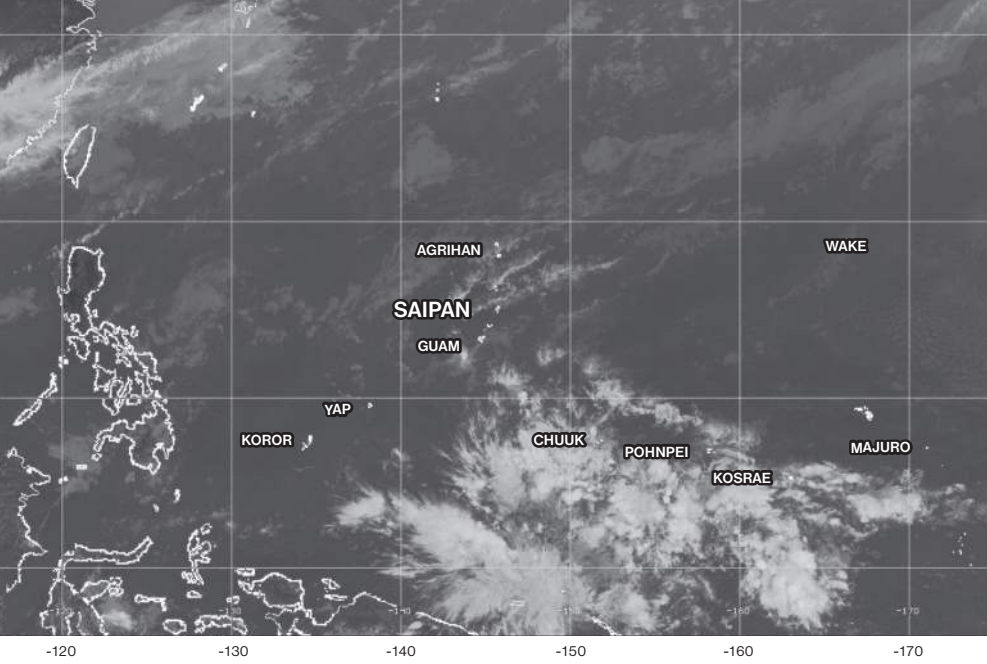
Markgraf wants to make it clear that she knows her loss and

frustration in this crisis aren't unique. She knows there are no easy answers but she's convinced that, in every realm, institutions need to find better ways to communicate.

"What we are going through with my mom is grief," she says. "What we're going through as a nation is grief. Help us find a way."

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Partly cloudy. A slight chance of light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	
86°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:18 AM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2020
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Mostly cloudy skies with gentle to moderate and isolated light showers prevail across the Marianas this morning. Buoys show seas between 6 and 7 feet. Altimetry shows seas between 6 and 8 feet east and well west of the waters and between 7 and 10 feet over the northern CNMI.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲	▼	°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 77°			
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°			
Yap	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°			
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 81°			
Pohnpei	Windy	86° / 79°			
Kosrae	Windy	86° / 79°			
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	84° / 79°			

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲	▼	°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	70° / 61°			
Beijing	Sunny	77° / 43°			
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	77° / 70°			
Honolulu	Showers	80° / 71°			
London	Cloudy	48° / 39°			
Los Angeles	Showers	58° / 48°			
Manila	Mostly Sunny	93° / 77°			
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	73° / 55°			
Miami	Partly Cloudy	79° / 73°			
New York	Rain	56° / 51°			
Osaka	Sunny	57° / 45°			
Paris	Partly Cloudy	64° / 46°			
Busan	Sunny	57° / 48°			
Rome	Mostly Sunny	66° / 45°			
Salem	Partly Cloudy	85° / 63°			
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	57° / 46°			
Seoul	Sunny	57° / 43°			
Tokyo	Sunny	64° / 45°			
Washington, DC	Showers	77° / 68°			

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PAPA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
5:47 AM	LOW TIDE		1.63
11:17 AM	HIGH TIDE		1.10
3:48 PM	LOW TIDE		1.48
11:11 PM	HIGH TIDE		-0.00

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:20 AM	6:28 PM
Sunday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM
Monday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:48 AM	2:20 PM	-
Friday	3:36 AM	3:12 PM	-
Saturday	4:20 AM	4:02 PM	-
Sunday	5:01 AM	4:51 PM	-
Monday	5:39 AM	5:39 PM	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 19, 2020							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA156	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	UA112	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily
SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6				
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	4, 7 up to Mar 22 only	7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	6 up to Mar 21 only
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3 up to Mar 18 only
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ6243	3:10pm	7:00pm	4, 6 up to Mar 19 only	OZ6233	7:30am	12:50pm	4, 6 up to Mar 19 only
OZ624	3:30pm	9:10pm	1, 5, 7 up to Mar 22 only	OZ625	8:10am	1:40pm	1, 5, 7 up to Mar 22 only
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	UA189/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR				

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily	1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily	1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily	2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
				2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
				2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
				2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
				2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Business

Panic buying leaves retailers scrambling to restock

NEW YORK (AP)—Grocers big and small are hiring more workers, paying overtime and limiting purchases on certain high demand items as they scramble to restock shelves that have been wiped out by panic shopping in response to the global viral pandemic.

Amazon said Tuesday that it will only accept shipments from suppliers of cleaning equipment, medical supplies and household goods at its warehouses for the next three weeks to fill surging demand. It is hiring 100,000 people across the U.S. to keep up with a crush of orders as more people stay at home and shop online. It will also temporarily raise pay by \$2 an hour through the end of April for hourly employees.

Many grocers are also limiting purchases of products like Purell sanitizers, Lysol cleaning spray and canned soup so that there is enough to go around. And companies like Walmart, Target and Wegman's are curbing store hours for the public in order to give workers time to restock shelves.

The moves come as industry executives insist supply chains remain strong despite frustrated customers showing up to stores and sometimes walking away empty-handed.

"When you have runs at grocery stores, there is a little time needed to catch up," said Lowell Randel, vice president for government and legal affairs at the Global Cold Chain Alliance, a trade group representing the refrigerated warehouse and delivery industry.

The National Retail Federation and the Retail Industry Leaders Association on Sunday urged shoppers to restrain themselves, asking that if they didn't need an item in the next two weeks to leave it for someone else who does.

"Hoarding and stockpiling creates unnecessary gaps between the time that someone who truly needs a product can find it back on retailers' shelves," they said in a statement. "This is particularly important for our most vulnerable neighbors—the elderly and those who are struggling with other health issues."

Some stores like Target, Northeastern grocery chain Stop & Shop and Australia's Woolworth are implementing special hours to accommodate elderly customers, who have been avoiding crowds that leave them susceptible to COVID-19, the disease that has infected nearly 130,000 people worldwide and caused more than 4,800 deaths. Jim Barth, owner of a family-owned butcher in New Providence, N.J., recently started a delivery service catering to older or sick customers but stopped taking online orders after getting inundated with other shoppers who were also trying to avoid crowds.

In France, the Rungis distribution center outside Paris feeds about a quarter of the country's population. Food arrives there from producers all over France -- cheese makers, farmers, orchards and more -- and elsewhere in Europe, to be parceled out to the supermarkets across the country's north. Normally popular with tourists hardy enough to arrive when it opens in the wee hours, it's been closed to all but the 12,000 employees.

French officials, like those elsewhere in Europe, say there's no reason for shortages if customers shop reasonably. In Paris on Monday, residents raided supermarkets in anticipation of a lockdown.

Border closures to keep out the sick are also posing problems around a Europe designed for open frontiers. In Slovenia, which lies in the path from Italy and Austria to the Balkans, cargo trucks recently waited for more than 24 hours for checks.



Shelves of hot dogs are nearly empty at a Walmart in Warrington, Pa., Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Concerns over the new coronavirus have led to consumer panic buying of grocery staples in stores across the country.

Docomo removes data caps

TAMUNING, Guam—Docomo Pacific has removed data caps for its postpaid subscribers and offers payment graces to keep the Marianas connected.

In times of rapid change, we rely on the strength of our connections. For the next 30 days we want to make it easier for you to stay connected to the things that matter most. We're removing all data caps for anyone with a postpaid mobile plan. During this time, we are also offering payment graces. There will be no disconnections nor late fees imposed on any customer who may be going through financial hardship.

"If you are a Docomo Pacific customer who has a postpaid mobile plan in Guam or the CNMI, we are giving you endless mobile data for the next 30 days. Endless data means that you can connect more,

work from home more, and share educational content and entertainment with your children who may be home from school," said Docomo Pacific president and CEO Rod Boss.

"We also recognize the economic strain that our residential and business customers are experiencing. We have paused all disconnects due to non-payment and will be waiving all late fees during the same 30-day period," he added.

Docomo Pacific C said its commitment to keeping customers connected remains. "We are here for you in-store, by phone, via email, and through social media. Let's stay Better Together in these trying times," said Boss.

Docomo Pacific is a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT Docomo, Japan's leading mobile operator and is headquartered in Tamuning, Guam. (PR)

SBA offers low-interest disaster loans

The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Upon a request received from a state's or territory's governor, SBA will issue under its own authority, as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that was recently signed by the President, an Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration.

Any such Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance declaration issued by the SBA makes loans available to small businesses and private, non-profit organizations in designated areas of a state or territory to help alleviate economic injury caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance will coordinate with the state's or territory's Governor to submit the request for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance.

Once a declaration is made for designated areas within a state, the information on the application process for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance will be made available to all affected communities as well as updated on our website: [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster).

SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.

These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%.

The federal agency offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay.

Its Economic Injury Disaster Loans are just one piece of the expanded focus of the federal government's coordinated response, and the SBA is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer-focused response possible.

For additional information, please contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center. Call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

Visit [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster) for more information. (PR)

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW 21,237.38 +1,048.86 5.20%	S&P 2,529.19 +143.06 6.00%	NASDAQ 7,334.78 +430.19 6.23%
---	--	---

EXCHANGE RATES

Australian Dollar	1.6620	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7645	Russian Ruble	75.2336
British Pound	0.8261	Indian Rupee	73.4417	Singapore Dollar	1.4292
Canadian Dollar	1.4197	Japanese Yen	107.0570	South Korean Won	1212.57
Chinese Yuan	6.8887	Malaysian Ringgit	4.3098	Swiss Franc	0.9579
Euro	0.9066	New Zealand Dollar	1.6788	Taiwan Dollar	29.7219
		Philippine Peso	50.0564	Thailand Baht	32.3525



Payless SuperFresh & Truckload Store



CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF®
FLAT IRON STEAK
\$6⁹⁹
LB.



CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF®
CHUCK ROAST
\$4⁹⁹
LB.



CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF®
TOP ROUND STEAK
\$3⁹⁹
LB.



CHICKEN LEG
QUARTERS
22LB. CASE
\$14⁹⁵
CASE

**YOU CAN SHOP,
EARN & SAVE!**

**SIGN UP TODAY
IT'S FREE!**
ASK US HOW



RUBY RED
GRAPEFRUITS
99¢
LB.



ORGANIC RAINBOW
CARROTS
99¢
LB.



FRESH RADISHES
60Z.
99¢
LB.



LOCAL BOK CHOY
\$1¹⁹
LB.



MISO MASTER
MELLOW WHITE
MISO PASTE
\$5⁹⁹
EA.



EARTH BALANCE
BUTTER SPREAD
ASSORTED
VARIETIES
\$4⁹⁹
EA.



EVERYDAY
ESSENTIAL
CREAM CHEESE
80Z
\$1⁹⁹
EA.



BAR S SMOKED
DELI HAM
2LB
\$9⁹⁹
EA.



BEN & JERRY'S
NON DAIRY
ICE CREAM
PINTS ASSORTED
\$6⁹⁹
EA.



CLARA'S
BREAKFAST
BURRITOS
CHILE VERDE
OR BLACK BEAN
\$3⁷⁹
EA.



OZERY
MORNING
ROUNDS
ASSORTED
FLAVORS
\$3²⁹
EA.



ESSENCE
SINGLE ROLL
TOILET PAPER
69¢
EA.



WELLNESS
BRAND CORE
GRAIN FREE
DOG FOOD
\$18⁹⁹
BAG



WELLNESS
BRAND ADULT
CAT FOOD
ASSORTED
VARIETIES
\$1⁴⁹
EA.



\$99⁹⁵
HP OFFICEJET
ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER



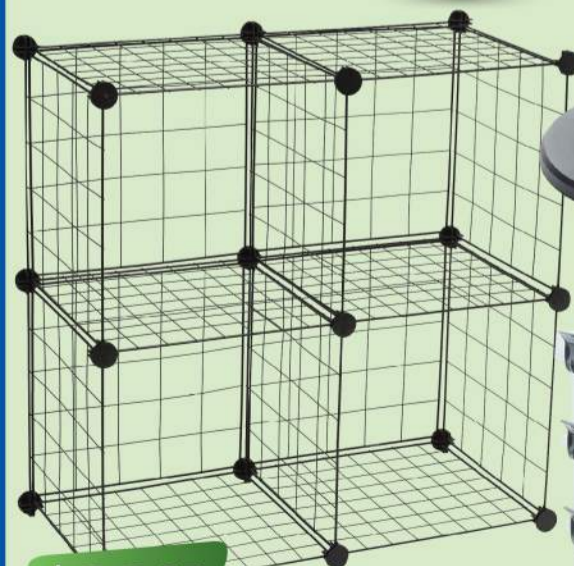
\$49⁹⁵
HOLMES OSCILLATING
30" TOWER FAN



\$179⁹⁵
LG 6,000 BTU A/C



\$99⁹⁵
WATER
DISPENSER



\$29⁹⁵
ESSENTIAL HOME 4 CUBE
WIRE STORAGE UNIT SET



\$8⁹⁵
GLAD 3-TIER STORAGE
BOX WITH CADDY



\$21⁹⁵
RECTANGULAR
POOL



\$25⁹⁵
NORTHWEST
TERRITORY
LOW RESIN
FOLDING CHAIR



\$35⁹⁵
NORTHWEST TERRITORY
BIG BOY XL MESH CHAIR



\$79⁹⁵
AUSSIE
WALK-A-BOUN
PORTABLE
CHARCOAL GRILL



\$159⁹⁵
WEBER 22" ORIGINAL
ROUND KETTLE
CHARCOAL GRILL



\$6⁹⁵
NAMYANG NATURAL
MINERAL WATER 20/500ML



\$45⁹⁵
IGLOO ISLAND BREEZE
48QT COOLER



\$79⁹⁵
DAHDOUL
JERUSALEM
5' X 8'
AREA RUG



\$5⁹⁵
DALTON 2X3 BOUND
RUGS ASSORTED



\$329⁹⁵
ESSENTIAL HOME
CAYMAN 5PC
HIGH TOP
DINING SET
Assembly required



\$25⁹⁵
COSCO STACK IT NO
BACK BOOSTER SEAT



\$109⁹⁵
BICYCLE 24" YS701
Assembly required



\$99⁹⁵
BICYCLE 26" YS728
Assembly required



Scan QR code to LIKE our Facebook page
and get the latest deals and products!

WE NOW ACCEPT FOOD STAMP

STORE HOURS: DAILY 8:00AM - 9:00PM
FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CALL: 234-1444

MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Nation

Trump's economic rescue package could approach \$1T

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a massive federal effort, President Donald Trump asked Congress to speed emergency checks to Americans, enlisted the military for MASH-like hospitals and implored ordinary people — particularly socially active millennials — to do their part by staying home to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

His proposed economic package alone could approach \$1 trillion, a rescue initiative not seen since the Great Recession. Trump wants checks sent to the public within two weeks and is urging Congress to pass the eye-popping stimulus package in a matter of days.

As analysts warn the country is surely entering a recession, the government is grappling with an enormous political undertaking with echoes of the 2008 financial crisis.

At the Capitol on Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell vowed the Senate would not adjourn until the work was done.

"Obviously, we need to act," McConnell said. "We're not leaving town until we have constructed and passed another bill."

But first, McConnell said, the Senate will vote on a House-passed package of sick pay, emergency food and free testing, putting it back on track for Trump's signature — despite Republican objections. "Gag, and vote for it anyway," he advised colleagues.

It was a signal of what the GOP leader called the "herculean" task ahead.



AP
President Donald Trump speaks during a press briefing with the coronavirus task force, at the White House, Tuesday, March 17, 2020, in Washington.

Senators gathered at an otherwise shut-down Capitol as Americans across the country were implored to heed advice and avoid crowds. Young adults, in particular, are being urged to quit going out because even seemingly healthy people can be spreading the virus that causes the COVID-19 illness.

Even so, presidential primary elections unfolded in Florida, Illinois and Arizona. Ohio's was called off hours before the polls were set to open.

After a savage drop at the start of the week, the stock

market rose as Trump and aides sketched out elements of the economic rescue package at a briefing. Economists doubted that would be enough to stop millions of jobs losses, even if in the short term.

Bigger than the \$700 billion 2008 bank bailout or the nearly \$800 billion 2009 recovery act, the White House proposal aims to provide a massive tax cut for wage-earners, \$50 billion for the airline industry and \$250 billion for small businesses. Two people familiar with the package described it to The Associated Press on the

condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

The amount that would be sent out in checks Americans is not yet disclosed. The White House said it liked GOP Sen. Mitt Romney's idea for \$1,000 checks, though not necessarily at that sum and not for wealthier people.

"This is a very unique situation," said Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, exiting a private briefing of Senate Republicans. "We've put a proposal on that table that would attract a trillion dollars

into the economy."

One GOP leader, Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, told

reporters afterward it "could be" up to \$1 trillion.

Senate Democrats produced their own \$750 billion proposal, which includes \$400 billion to shore up hospitals and other emergency operations in response to the global pandemic and \$350 billion to bolster the safety net with unemployment checks and other aid to Americans.

"The aid has to be workers first," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, not what happened in 2008, when the big banks took precedence. Schumer also said it's time to call out the National Guard to provide security as communities reel from the crisis.

The slow-moving Congress is being asked to approve the far-reaching economic rescue as it tries to rise to the occasion of these fast times.

Trump mulls sending all who cross border illegally to Mexico

SAN DIEGO (AP)—The Trump administration is considering a plan to turn back all people who cross the border illegally from Mexico, two administration officials said Tuesday, using powers they say the president has during pandemics like the coronavirus outbreak to mount what would be one of the most aggressive attempts to curtail illegal immigration.

The plan is under consideration and no final decisions have been made, according to the officials, who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the plan hasn't been announced.

The officials said the president has authority to take such action in a pandemic and that Mexico's efforts to stop the spread of the coronavirus, along with Venezuela's, have been the weakest in North and South America. The officials said its authority relies on a law that gives the president authority to deny entry to people or to reject cargo if the Surgeon General determines there is "serious danger" of bringing a communicable disease to the United States.

The administration had declared in November 2018 that anyone who crossed the

border illegally from Mexico would be denied asylum, a measure has been blocked in court. Last month, a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel in San Francisco upheld a lower court decision to keep that asylum ban on hold while a lawsuit proceeds.

The ban now being considered, which was first reported by The New York Times, would turn back to Mexico all people who cross the border illegally, not just those seeking asylum.

Homeland Security Department spokeswoman Heather Swift said the president was focused on protecting Americans from the coronavirus and that "all options are on the table."

Immigrant advocacy groups condemned the possible move.

"Decisions relating to the pandemic should be guided by public health officials, not by the Trump administration's long-standing agenda to close the border to refugees seeking asylum," said Eleanor Acer, Human Rights First's director of refugee protection. "The administration is using the pandemic as a pretext to advance its long-term goal of curtailing asylum rights for people fleeing persecution."

With 3 more victories, Biden pulls further away from Sanders

WASHINGTON (AP)—Joe Biden swept to victory in Florida, Illinois and Arizona on Tuesday, increasingly pulling away with a Democratic presidential primary upended by the coronavirus and building pressure on Bernie Sanders to abandon his campaign.

The former vice president's third big night in as many weeks came amid tremendous uncertainty confronting the Democratic contest as it collides with efforts to slow the spread of the virus that have shut down large swaths of American life. Polls were shuttered in Ohio, and although balloting went ahead as scheduled in the three other states, election workers and voters reported problems.

Biden's quest for his party's nomination now seems well within reach. He needs less than half of the remaining delegates. The party es-

tablishment has also lined up behind him as the best option in November to try and unseat President Donald Trump.

Using a livestream to address supporters from his home state of Delaware, Biden seemed ready to move past the primary. He paid tribute to Sanders for advancing key issues like affordable health care and combating climate change.

"Sen. Sanders and his supporters have brought a remarkable passion and tenacity to all of these issues. Together they have shifted the fundamental conversation in this country," Biden said. "So let me say, especially to the young voters who have been inspired by Sen. Sanders, I hear you. I know what's at stake. I know what we have to do."

For his part, Sanders made no immediate move on Tuesday to contact Biden, according to people familiar with the

situation who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak for the candidates. During remarks early in the night, the Vermont senator said little about the future of the race and instead focused on the coronavirus outbreak.

As Biden and Sanders considered their next steps, Trump formally clinched the Republican presidential nomination after facing minimal opposition.

But much of the action was on the Democratic side, where higher vote totals in some key states suggested enthusiasm that even the coronavirus couldn't contain. Turnout in Florida's Democratic primary was on pace to approach 2 million, surpassing the 1.7 million who cast ballots four years ago.

Sanders' path to the nomination is quickly narrowing, and some Democrats are now

calling on him to drop out in the name of party unity. Top advisers have said he's considering whether the political landscape could look different as the virus continues to reshape life across the country, though.

Still, the race increasingly favors Biden. He maintained the strength on Tuesday with African Americans and older voters who have been the hallmark of his campaign. He also appeared to chip away at Sanders' previous advantage with Hispanics that helped him win Nevada and California early in the race.

In Florida, Latinos were roughly 20% of Democratic primary voters, and they largely sided with Biden. The former vice president received the support of 65% of Puerto Rican voters and 56% of Cubans, according to AP VoteCast, a broad survey of primary voters.

Asia

India's restrictive criteria for virus testing may mask toll

NEW DELHI (AP)—A British citizen appeared at a public hospital in India's capital with a cough, difficulty breathing and a private clinic's referral for a coronavirus test. She was turned away.

Indian authorities said Tuesday they would not widen testing for the virus, as most affected nations are doing, despite criticism that limited testing could mask COVID-19 cases in the world's second most populous country.

The World Health Organization has urged countries to test as many people as possible to curb the pandemic, but India has only been testing those who have traveled from affected countries or come in contact with a confirmed case and shown symptoms after two weeks of quarantine. On Tuesday it added health care workers with symptoms who are treating patients with severe respiratory illnesses.

But officials said the WHO guidance didn't apply in India because the spread of the disease has been less severe than elsewhere. Balaram Bhargava, who heads the Indian Council of Medical Research, India's top medical research body, said the guidance was "premature" for India, where community transmission hadn't yet been detected.

"Therefore it creates more fear, more paranoia and more hype," he said.



Indian workers make face masks which are in demand due to the new virus outbreak at a private manufacturing unit in Mumbai, India, Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

The British patient sent home from the hospital last week in New Delhi didn't fulfill India's testing criteria.

The woman, who requested anonymity fearing business consequences for her employer, said she told hospital officials that she may have had contact with a coronavirus patient in her hospitality sector

job, but couldn't be sure.

After trying and failing to be tested a second time, she left India this week for France, where her family lives, and which President Emmanuel Macron said Monday was "at war" with the virus, announcing extreme measures to curb it.

Indian authorities have

justified their restrictions as a way to keep a deluge of people from demanding tests that would cost the government money it needs to combat other diseases such as tuberculosis, malnutrition and HIV/AIDs.

ICMR said there was no need to offer such testing

more widely. However, authorities said they're preparing for community spread by bolstering their lab testing infrastructure.

As a result of the stringent criteria, sick people with potential exposure to the new virus are being sent home, and some experts fear that India's

caseload could be much higher than government statistics indicate.

Bhargava said virus infections in India can still be traced back to people who traveled into the country from affected locales. He said if community transmission is detected, then testing protocols would be revised.

Authorities have confirmed 126 cases, most of which have been "imported"—linked to foreign travel or direct contact with someone who caught the disease abroad.

India is conducting only about 90 tests per day, despite having the capacity for as many as 8,000. So far, 11,500 people have been tested.

But concerns of so-far undetected communal spread are growing.

"Given the pattern of disease in other places, and given our low level of testing, then I do think that community transmission is happening," said Dr. Gagandeep Kang, the director of the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute.

WHO said while self-initiated isolation by people with mild symptoms remains the most important community intervention, testing of all suspected cases, symptomatic contacts of probable and confirmed cases, would still be needed.

China to expel American reporters after US curbs its media

BEIJING (AP)—China said Wednesday it will revoke the media credentials of all American journalists at three major U.S. news organizations, in effect expelling them from the country, in response to U.S. restrictions on Chinese state-controlled media.

The foreign ministry said American citizens working for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post with credentials expiring before the end of the year must surrender their press cards within 10 days.

It is the latest in a series of tit-for-tat actions by the two governments as the Trump administration takes a more confrontational stance in dealing with China than his predecessors. The countries remained enmeshed in a trade war despite a recent truce and have traded angry words over the coronavirus pandemic that emerged in China and has spread worldwide.

The move comes after the Trump administration designated five Chinese media outlets as foreign missions

and restricted the number of Chinese who could work for them in a de facto expulsion of about one-third of their Chinese staff.

China described its steps as "necessary and reciprocal countermeasures that China is compelled to take in response to the unreasonable oppression the Chinese media organizations experience in the U.S."

The American journalists will likely have to leave China because their visas are tied to their press credentials. They will also be unable to work in the semi-autonomous territories of Hong Kong and Macao, the foreign ministry said in a release posted on its website.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo disputed the comparison between the U.S. and Chinese actions, telling reporters in Washington that they enjoy press freedoms that don't exist in China.

"The individuals that we identified a few weeks back were not media that were acting here freely," he said. "They were part of Chinese

propaganda outlets. We've identified these as foreign missions under American law. These aren't apples to apples, and I regret China's decision today to further foreclose the world's ability to conduct free press operations."

Editors of all three news organizations condemned the action.

"The Chinese government's decision is particularly regrettable because it comes in the midst of an unprecedented global crisis, when clear and reliable information about the international response to covid-19 is essential," said Marty Baron, executive editor of The Washington Post. "Severely limiting the flow of that information, which China now seeks to do, only aggravates the situation."

Dean Baquet, executive editor of The New York Times, called it a "grave mistake" for China to cut itself off from some of the world's top news organizations and called on the Chinese and American governments to move quickly to resolve the dispute.

PH lifts deadline for foreigners to leave region

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine government lifted a 72-hour deadline for thousands of foreign travelers to leave the country's main northern region, which has been placed under quarantine due to a growing number of coronavirus infections, officials said Wednesday.

President Rodrigo Duterte declared what he is calling an "enhanced community quarantine" on the main island of Luzon that requires millions of people to stay mostly at home and restricts land, air and sea travel to fight the COVID-19 disease.

The monthlong containment, which took effect Tuesday and applies to a third of the archipelago of more than 100 million people, restricted public movement and caused confusion and stranded many health workers and emergency personnel after mass public transport was suspended.

Philippine officials initially asked foreign travelers, including tourists, to leave Luzon, where the capital Manila is located, within 72 hours to avoid being stranded because

all flights from the densely populated region would eventually be suspended.

An inter-agency group dealing with the health crisis, however, announced late Tuesday that the deadline had been lifted and foreigners could leave Luzon anytime during the monthlong quarantine.

"We don't want to give them pressure because it'll be more difficult for them, so we opened up," Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles told a late-evening televised news conference.

Still, many travelers faced problems, including the suspension of public mass transport in Luzon. Some airlines have cancelled international flights, complicating the problems of outbound travelers.

The Philippines has reported 187 cases of infections, according to the Department of Health, which confirmed Tuesday that one of its officials was among those sickened. Fourteen people have died, the most in Southeast Asia.

While the virus can be deadly, particularly for the el-

derly and people with other health problems, for most people it causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. Some feel no symptoms at all and the vast majority of people recover.

The drastic moves announced by Duterte on Monday night, which include the suspension of mass transport, caught many by surprise and sparked traffic jams and confusion in many areas.

Hundreds of taxis were stopped by police along metropolitan Manila's main EDSA highway for violating the transport ban and made to wait for hours in long rows on the sidelines. Many drivers said they were unaware of the ban and were eventually allowed to leave without fines.

"I'm the breadwinner of my family. If I don't work for a month, will the government help me put food on our table, pay our house rent and our bills?" asked one of the taxi drivers, Jun Vergara. "We support this lockdown but we want to know if the government will help us survive it."

World

Governments grapple with virus border closures, lockdowns

BERLIN (AP)—Governments around the globe grappled Wednesday with how to implement border closures, travel restrictions and lockdowns that have unleashed transportation chaos and imperiled economies, but which authorities say are needed to slow the spread of the new coronavirus.

European Union leaders agreed to shut down the bloc's external borders for 30 days, while the U.S. and Canada were reportedly working out the details of a mutual ban on nonessential travel between the two countries.

In Southeast Asia, the causeway between Malaysia and the financial hub of Singapore was eerily quiet after Malaysia shut its borders, while the Philippines backed down on an order giving foreigners 72 hours to leave from a large part of its main island.

The administration of President Donald Trump was considering a plan to immediately return to Mexico all people who cross America's southern border illegally, according to two administration officials who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the plan hasn't been finalized.

The coronavirus has now spread to every state in the U.S., with West Virginia becoming the last to report an infection. Hawaii's governor encouraged travelers to postpone



A patient in a biocontainment unit is carried on a stretcher at the Columbus Covid 2 Hospital in Rome, Monday, March 16, 2020

their island vacations for at least the next 30 days, while the governor of Nevada — home to Las Vegas — ordered a monthlong closure of the state's casinos.

Increasingly worried about the economic fallout of the global shutdown, the U.S., Britain and the Netherlands announced rescue packages totaling hundreds of billions of dollars, while longtime International Monetary Fund critic

Venezuela asked the institution for a \$5 billion loan. Major Asian stock markets were higher Wednesday on Trump's promise of aid to get the U.S. economy through the outbreak.

In Brussels, Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission president, said there had been "a unanimous and united approach" to the decision to prohibit most foreigners from entering the EU for 30 days.

German Chancellor Angela

Merkel said European leaders agreed in a conference call to the commission's proposal for an entry ban to the bloc — along with Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Britain — with "very, very limited exceptions." Germany will implement the decision immediately.

On Monday, the EU issued guidelines to ease the flow of critical goods like food and medicine, while helping individual nations restrict nonessential travel.

But on Tuesday, there was

chaos at many borders, with traffic backed up for dozens of kilometers (miles).

"We are all desperate, cold and sleepless here for a third day," said Janina Stukiene, who was stuck in Lithuania on the border with Poland with her husband and son. "We just want to go home."

The line of cars and trucks in Lithuania was about 60 kilometers (37 miles) long after Poland closed its border. Similar traffic jams were visible on the borders with Germany and

the Czech Republic.

Droves of Malaysians endured hourslong traffic jams as they sought to get into Singapore before the border closure. More than 300,000 people commute daily to Singapore to work and many have chosen to stay there during the lockdown.

Malaysia's restricted movement order came after a sharp spike in coronavirus cases to 673, making it the worst-affected country in Southeast Asia. About two-thirds of the cases are linked to a mass religious gathering at a mosque in a Kuala Lumpur suburb that has also sickened participants from Brunei, Singapore and Indonesia.

The self-governing island of Taiwan said Wednesday that it too would ban foreigners from entry and Taiwanese nationals would have to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

In Thailand, Bangkok's notorious red light districts were due to go dark Wednesday after a government order closing bars, schools, movie theaters and many other venues.

French President Emmanuel Macron tightened internal guidelines, allowing people to leave home only to buy food, go to work or do essential tasks. He said people had not complied with earlier guidelines and "we are at war."

Iran warns virus could kill 'millions' in Islamic Republic

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran issued its most dire warning yet Tuesday about the new coronavirus ravaging the country, suggesting "millions" could die in the Islamic Republic if people keep traveling and ignore health guidance.

A state TV journalist who also is a medical doctor gave the warning only hours after hard-line Shiite faithful on Monday night pushed their way into the courtyards of two major shrines that were finally closed due to the virus. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a religious ruling prohibiting "unnecessary" travel.

Roughly 9 out of 10 of the over 18,000 confirmed cases of the virus in the Middle East come from Iran, where authorities denied for days the risk the outbreak posed. Officials have implemented new checks for people trying to leave major cities ahead of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, on Friday, but have hesitated to quarantine the areas.

The death toll in Iran saw another 13% increase Tuesday. Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said the virus had killed 135 more people to raise the total to 988 amid over 16,000 cases.

Jordan announced a state of emergency, banning gatherings of more than 10 people, and Israel issued its own strict guidelines.

Most infected people experience only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, and recover within weeks. But the virus is highly contagious and can be spread by people with no visible symptoms. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

In announcing the new warning, the Iranian state TV journalist, Dr. Afroz Eslami, cited a study by Tehran's prestigious Sharif University of Technology, which offered three scenarios: If people co-

operate fully now, Iran will see 120,000 infections and 12,000 deaths before the outbreak is over; if they offer medium cooperation, there will be 300,000 cases and 110,000 deaths.

But if people fail to follow any guidance, it could collapse Iran's already-strained medical system, Eslami said. If the "medical facilities are not sufficient, there will be 4 million cases, and 3.5 million people will die," she said.

Eslami did not elaborate on what metrics the study used, but even reporting it on Iran's tightly controlled state media represented a major change for a country whose officials had for days denied the severity of the crisis.

Underlining that urgency was the fatwa issued by Khamenei, which prohibited "unnecessary" travel. It comes as the public ignored repeated warnings and pleas from security forces. Such a decree is rare by Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters.

EU to ban most foreign travelers for 30 days to curb virus

BRUSSELS (AP)—European Union leaders agreed Tuesday to immediately impose travel restrictions on most foreigners entering Europe for at least 30 days to limit the spread of the new coronavirus, and to set up fast-track transport lanes to keep vital medical equipment, food and goods flowing smoothly inside the bloc.

As the virus case count in Europe climbed to over 60,000 and with more than 2,700 people dead, nervous national governments have introduced quick-fix measures such as partial border closures and quarantines with little consultation. The EU sought over three hours of video talks to forge a united front against an illness that is also wreaking economic havoc.

"We reaffirmed the need to work together and do everything necessary to tackle the crisis and its consequences," European Council President Charles Michel told report-

ers. He said the 27 EU countries agreed to impose border restrictions on tourism and non-essential business "as fast as possible."

The plan exempts long-term EU residents, diplomats, some healthcare and transport workers.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said her proposal for the restrictions "got a lot of support by the member states. It's up to them now to implement. They said they will immediately do that."

Chancellor Angela Merkel said the leaders agreed in a conference call to an entry ban with "very, very limited exceptions," and that Germany would start implementing it immediately.

Merkel said citizens of Switzerland, Liechtenstein, the United Kingdom and Norway are exempt. The EU leaders also agreed to coordinate the repatriation of EU citizens stranded outside the bloc, she said.

Von der Leyen said they

also backed a proposal to set up "green lanes" for trucks and other priority vehicles aimed at beating the traffic jams that have formed around crossing points on internal borders, where no ID or vehicle checks were required just days ago.

Those transport guidelines, she said, "have to be implemented now"

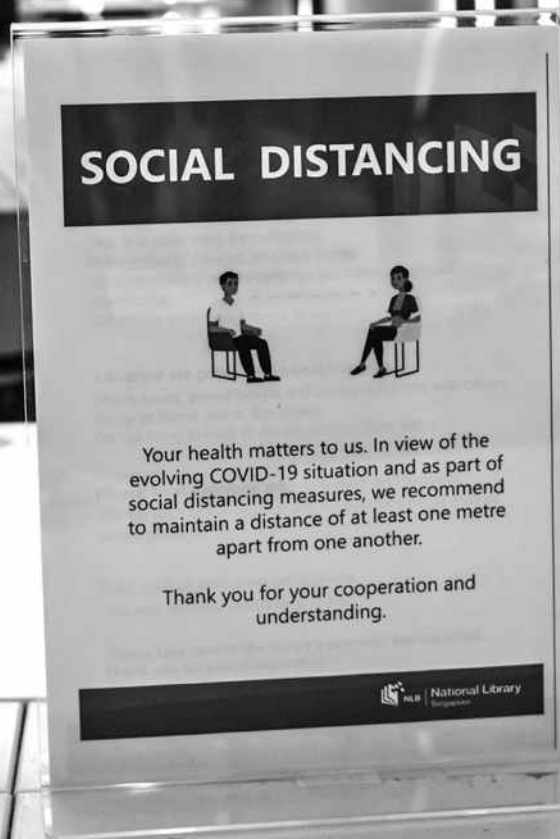
The leaders agreed to meet again for a third video conference and to cancel a summit they planned to attend in Brussels late next week.

"We are ready to do everything that is required. We shall not hesitate to take additional measures as the situation evolves," von der Leyen told reporters.

In a new update Tuesday, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said that 61,098 cases of the coronavirus have now been reported in Europe and that 2,740 people have died, the overwhelming majority in Italy.

Focus

Best strategies against virus: Track, isolate, communicate



AP
In this March 16, 2020, photo, a sign about social distancing is placed on a table at the National Library in Singapore. As the virus outbreak spreads ever further, it's becoming clear that some strategies are more likely to succeed in containing it: pro-active efforts to track down and isolate cases, access to basic, affordable public health and clear, reassuring messaging from leaders.

By EE MING TOH and
ELAINE KURTENBACH
Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP)—Singapore, a tiny city-state of less than 6 million people, had one of the earliest and biggest clusters of cases of the coronavirus in early February, before it began its rapid, inexorable expansion around the globe.

Within weeks, the country's tally of infections with the highly contagious virus that causes COVID-19 was overtaken by skyrocketing case-loads in South Korea, several European countries and the U.S.

Some strategies are proving more effective than others in containing the pandemic: pro-active efforts to track down and isolate the infected, access to basic, affordable public health care, and clear, reassuring messaging from leaders. East Asia's experience with the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, which also originated in China, has likewise helped.

Since testing rates vary widely, it's hard to know for sure. But Singapore appears to be among the handful of places that tick all those boxes, though recent spikes in new cases show that any lapses can have dire consequences.

Singapore's first case, confirmed on Jan. 23, was a 66-year-old man from Wuhan, the Chinese city where the disease was first detected in late December.

By mid-February, the number of recovered patients in the Southeast Asian city-state was outpacing new ones. That changed in early March after 47 cases were tracked to a Feb. 15 dinner gathering. As of Wednesday, Singapore had 266 confirmed

cases and no deaths from the virus.

As new infections increased, the government tightened quarantine controls.

Taiwan, a self-governed island off the coast of mainland China, has confirmed just 77 cases and one death. Most recent cases were residents returning from overseas travel.

Hong Kong has reported 167 cases and four deaths. Its leader, Carrie Lam, on Tuesday warned against all outbound travel and said any people arriving from outside greater China will face 14-day home quarantines or medical surveillance.

Of the 13 cases found in the tiny gambling enclave of Macao, 10 have recovered. Casinos have been closed for weeks to battle the outbreak.

Cambodia, which has confirmed a dozen cases, last weekend moved to stop foreigners traveling from France, the U.S., Spain, Germany, Italy and Iran after several new cases were found among travelers.

Thailand, likewise, appears to have kept cases under control with aggressive public health campaigns intended to minimize infections, though new cases jumped recently as stepped-up testing found clusters linked to a boxing tournament and an evening gathering at a bar. So far, 177 cases have been confirmed among 70 million Thais, even though it's a top destination for travelers, especially from China.

Assuming the numbers reported to the World Health Organization are accurate, many of the countries with lower caseloads are relatively isolated geographically: Singapore, New Zealand, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Mongolia. Some others may

be latecomers in testing and reporting: Russia, Indonesia, Vietnam.

For Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong, the experience of battling the 2003 SARS outbreak, which infected some 8,000 people and killed nearly 800, helped ensure residents took the risks seriously, experts say.

"Almost everyone played ball and followed accordingly," said Leong Hoe Nam, an infectious diseases specialist at Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital. "SARS was our baptism by fire and we were forced to learn everything by swimming in the deep end of the pool."

After the SARS outbreak, when 238 people were infected and 33 died in Singapore, the city revamped its already excellent health care system, writing up new protocols for containing outbreaks. It set up "fever centers" to isolate suspected cases, invested in equipment and improved training in handling infectious diseases, Leong said. So when the first case of COVID-19 was discovered, Singapore was ready to act, he said.

From Feb. 1, Singapore blocked entry and transit for new visitors who had traveled to mainland China within 14 days. These restrictions have since expanded to include visitors with recent travel to Iran, northern Italy or South Korea.

When the number of local cases without links to previous cases or travel in China surged, the government raised its alert to "orange," the second-highest level, on Feb. 7. The Singapore Air Show, a huge event that draws thousands, scaled back the number of participants and barred most exhibitors and visitors from China from attending. Good hygiene

and avoiding handshakes were recommended.

The National Public Health Laboratory, set up after SARS, was prepared to fast-track testing, using advanced diagnostics and newly developed COVID-19 test kits.

Rapid testing and isolation of suspected cases, and painstaking tracing of contacts, helped by police, surveillance videos and ATM records, have helped prevent a worse local outbreak, said Tikki Pangestu, a visiting professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and former director of WHO's research policy and cooperation department.

Once a COVID-19 case is confirmed, Singapore embarks on "diligent contact tracing," said Pangestu. It ordered workers arriving from countries with endemic virus infections to stay home. Worship services were suspended in favor of live-streaming after a cluster was found at a church. Schools suspended mass assemblies and staggered recess.

So far, 5,700 people have been quarantined.

In Thailand, too, public health workers have gone door-to-door to track down contacts, said Thanarak Plipat, deputy director-general of the Disease Control Department of the Health Ministry. "We must go see them ourselves. This is an old public health way. We do our best," he said.

It has mostly worked. But newly confirmed clusters show one dinner, one boxing match or one religious gathering can undo weeks of work.

Initially, Germany was thought to have done relatively well at slowing the spread, but infections there have jumped to 9,360.

In South Korea, where more than 270,000 people have been tested, newly discovered cases are dropping sharply, but clusters are still popping up, at a call center, at a church.

This week, Malaysia has reported a surge in cases linked to a religious gathering in its capital last week. Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia also have confirmed new cases linked to that gathering.

It's unclear if the strategies used in an authoritarian society like Singapore would work in bigger countries whose citizens expect greater personal freedoms: In March, a Chinese couple was charged under Singapore's Infectious Diseases Act for misinforming health officials and obstructing contact tracing. If convicted, they may be imprisoned or fined.

But as virus controls expand to unprecedented levels in many other countries, the policies are looking prescient.

Singapore is a small island with strong public trust in the government, "a strong healthcare system, excellent information systems and plenty of money," said Pangestu. "Many other countries, especially developing ones, do not have these capacities or characteristics."

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, lauded for adopting a calming, clear approach early on, said in a televised talk last week that the situation was under control but the government was planning ahead, trying to free up hospital beds to be prepared for any surge in cases.

Singaporeans "feel we are all in this together," Lee said, "and we don't leave anyone behind."

Environment

NEW YORK (AP)—When the Brooklyn clothing factory where she worked closed its doors, Josefa Marin started picking up cans and bottles from trash cans to make ends meet.

A decade later, the 50-year-old Mexican immigrant is handed hundreds of recyclables by bars and clubs and by concierges of private buildings, who know her so well that they even give her the keys to their trash rooms so she can take what she needs.

For Marin, working alongside her partner, Pedro Galicia, canning is a little business that allows her to pay bills, cover her \$1,500 per month rent and put food on the table for two kids.

"This is our job, we have learned to survive doing this, whether it's hot in the summer or cold in the winter," she said, hunkered down wearing plastic gloves, while fishing through containers.

In one of the most expensive cities in the world, where monthly rents in wealthy neighborhoods surpass \$10,000, people who scour through trash might be viewed by some as probably homeless, but many so-called canners refute that claim.

They are called "bottle professionals" by some redemption centers employees who describe them as people who know by heart each recycling and trash pick-up route, who buy from other canners and who take the job seriously thanks to a 1982 law in New York that allows consumers to return empty containers for five cents.

"They have the buildings that they are dedicated to. And if they do their job properly through their network, they should be able to earn, you know, 200 to 250 dollars a day, which should equate out to over 30 dollars an hour," said Conrad Cutler, president of Galvanize Group, a redemption center that sends trucks to Manhattan to buy from about 220 canners. "It's not work that everybody would want to do, but it's certainly an honest way to make a living."

The closing of restaurants and bars in the city due to the coronavirus will mean less bottles and cans for canners.

However, those who collect cans from residential buildings and concierges expect big quantities as residents hunker down.

The majority of canners use gloves and some now use masks as protection against



A canner arrives with her haul of plastic bottles at the Sure We Can, a Brooklyn non-profit redemption center, Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020, in New York. In one of the most expensive cities in the world, people who scour through trash might be viewed by some as homeless or drug addicts but there are canners who dispute that claim. They are called "bottle professionals" by some redemption centers employees who describe them as people who know by heart each recycling and trash pick-up route, who buy from other canners and who take the job seriously.

AP

In New York, *making a life* out of bottles and cans

By **CLAUDIA TORRENS**

Associated Press

germs, but they keep going out on the streets as they need cash on a regular basis.

"I think we have a high immunization system because we are always around trash," said Ana Martinez de Luco, a nun who co-founded Sure We Can, a Brooklyn nonprofit redemption center. Some canners sit on the nonprofits board.

It isn't clear what will happen to these underground economy workers if New York City starts putting restrictions on people leaving their homes in an attempt to control the virus outbreak.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said Tuesday that residents should be prepared to "shelter in place" if the city and state decide it is safer to keep people away from each other indoors.

Under the Bottle Bill, beverage distributors return redemption centers the five-cent deposit and pay them a 3.5-cent handling fee. Besides New York, nine more states in the country have bottle bills.

Distributor trucks, for example, park every day in front of Sure We Can. The smell of beer from empty bottles fills

the air and a clinking noise is heard all day as dozens of canners come from the streets, take out their material from shopping carts and place it in clear bags or cardboard boxes.

They all know how to sort each container: some belong to Corona, others to Pepsi, others to Polar Spring. Each can-

ner will get between six and six and a half cents per can or bottle if they do the sorting.

That's what Josefa Teco works on every week. Teco, 57, who is a Mexican immigrant started canning five years ago, when she became unemployed after the tortilla factory she worked at moved

out of state due to high rents.

She and her husband Juan have informal agreements to take recyclables from several bars and from a building they also help clean. They make around \$10 for a bag of 200 cans and bottles.

"I am not going to ask people 'give me a dollar.' No, no.

I prefer to do this so I can have my money, to eat, and for all expenses," she said.

Sure We Can serves more canners each year: about 500 in 2017, more than 700 in 2018 and more than 800 last year, de Luco said.

The job is not only done by Latin American or Chinese immigrants, she said, but also by the elderly, people with disabilities and all kinds of low-skill workers or business owners out of a job. Many are not "bottle professionals" but people who needs some extra cash. De Luco is fighting for the nonprofit to stay alive after the landlord asked them to leave so he can sell the property.

There are no official statistics on how many canners are in the city, but an environmental consulting firm called Eunomia estimates the number to be approximately between 4,000 and 8,000.

Chicago Crosby is one of them. The New Yorker started canning seven years ago, when her mother got sick and she took a leave of absence from her job that became permanent. At first, she would get strange looks, she said, but now people help her on a regular basis, giving her all their empty bottles and cans.

"I am mainly doing pickups from this person, that person, and it is so many now," said Crosby. "I have to keep a calendar of who called me on this day, I know it is every two weeks for this one, I know it is one week for that one. So that keeps me very, very busy."

Canners have sometimes been at odds with officials because once recycling is left on the curb it belongs to the city. However, Belinda Mager, director of communications for the city's Sanitation Department, said that it is not illegal for individuals to redeem cans and bottles and her department does not oppose residents who do this to make ends meet.

"Our goal is to send zero waste to landfills," she said.

For Jesus Corral, 41, and Carlos Vega, 44, canning is a temporary lifeline until they find a better job. The Mexican immigrants sleep in a public park in Greenpoint and walk the streets opening trash cans.

"What do you have?" Corral asked in Spanish on a recent morning to an employee of a Brooklyn meat warehouse, who then went to the back and came out with only a few empty water bottles.

"That's okay. We already made our money for the day," explained Vega, who had spent all night canning. "I am looking forward to the summer. We make more. People drink more, so, more bottles."



Empty cans are organized and stored at the Sure We Can, a Brooklyn non-profit redemption center Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020, in New York. They are called "bottle professionals" by some redemption centers employees who describe them as people who know by heart each recycling and trash pick-up route, who buy from other canners and who take the job seriously.

AP

Life & Style

Cinemas close nationwide, Disney postpones 'Black Widow'

NEW YORK (AP)—U.S. movie theaters have closed nationwide due to the coronavirus pandemic, turning dark nearly all of the country's 40,000-plus screens in an unprecedented shutdown.

With most of Hollywood's March and April releases already postponed, the Walt Disney Co. on Tuesday also cleared out its May releases as well, including Marvel's "Black Widow."

The largest chains had tried to remain open even as Hol-

lywood postponed its upcoming release plans and guidelines for social distancing steadily diminished the recommended size of crowds. But after President Donald Trump on Monday urged against gatherings of more than 10 people, AMC Theaters, the nation's largest chain, said Tuesday its theaters would close altogether.

AMC said the latest guidelines made movie theater operations "essentially impossible." It said it would close

all locations in the U.S. for at least six to 12 weeks. Regal, the second largest chain, said Monday that its theaters would close until further notice.

The Walt Disney Co. also indefinitely postponed "Black Widow," which had been set to open May 1. Marvel movies have for years been the regular kickoff to the summer movie going season. The company also put off the releases of "David Copperfield (May 8) and "The Woman in the Window" (May 15).

With movie theaters locked down for the foreseeable future, some studios took the extraordinary step of funneling new or recently released films onto home viewing platforms. Universal Pictures



The Varsity Theater, home to concerts, used the marquee to address the need for washing hands due to the coronavirus, the disease that is caused by the new coronavirus, Monday, March 16, 2020 near the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. AP

Tom Hanks says he has the 'blahs' but no fever in isolation

NEW YORK (AP)—Tom Hanks says he feels the "blahs" but has no fever as he and wife Rita Wilson remain in isolation in an Australian residence after being discharged from a hospital following their coronavirus diagnosis.

A representative for the Oscar winner confirmed Tuesday that the pair were no longer hospitalized, and Hanks himself provided an update saying he was doing chores and getting beaten by his wife in cards as they remain self-quarantined.

"Hey folks. Good news: One week after testing positive, in self-isolation, the symptoms are much the same. No fever but the blahs. Folding dishes and doing the dishes leads to a nap on the couch. Bad news: my wife has won 6 straight hands of Gin Rummy

and now leads by 201 points," he posted on social media Tuesday evening.

Instead of a photo of himself or his wife, the post showed an old typewriter that he traveled with "that I used to love. We are all in this together. Flatten the curve," he wrote, promoting the idea of social distancing to prevent further spread of the disease.

The couple arrived in Australia in late January on the Gold Coast, where an Elvis Presley biopic directed by Baz Luhrmann was to be shot. Hanks plays Presley's manager, Colonel Tom Parker. The film, slated for release in October 2021, has suspended production, Warner Bros. said.

Wilson, a singer-songwriter, has performed in Brisbane and Sydney during the couple's stay in Australia.

Judge hands major win to Katy Perry in 'Dark Horse' dispute

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A federal judge in Los Angeles handed a major victory to Katy Perry on Tuesday, overturning a jury's verdict that found the pop superstar and her collaborators copied her 2013 hit "Dark Horse" from a 2009 Christian rap song.

U.S. District Judge Christina

said Monday it will make its current and upcoming films available for on-demand rental, becoming the first major studio to break the traditional theatrical window of 90 days

A. Snyder said in her decision that the disputed section of the rap song, "Joyful Noise" by rapper Marcus Gray was not distinctive enough to be protected by copyright as the jury found.

"It is undisputed in this case, even viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to plaintiffs, that the signature elements of

due to the pandemic.

The studio said it will put movies currently in theaters—"Invisible Man," "The Hunt," "Emma"—up for rental as early as Friday. It also said

the eight-note ostinato in "Joyful Noise" is not a particularly unique or rare combination," Snyder wrote in her decision.

The plaintiffs plan to appeal. "When the jurors returned a unanimous verdict of infringement, I cautioned my clients that we had only finished Round 11 of a 15-round match

that "Trolls World Tour," one of the only major releases left on the April calendar, will debut in theaters and on-demand services simultaneously. A 48-hour rental will cost \$19.99.

and that the next round would take place in the court of appeals," Gray's attorney Michael A. Kahn said in an email to the Associated Press, referencing the numerous pre-trial rulings in his client's favor. "We believe the jury was right and will do our best to restore their verdict on appeal."

The Rolling Stones postpone tour due to coronavirus

NEW YORK (AP)—The Rolling Stones are postponing its 15-city North American tour because of the growing coronavirus outbreak.

The band announced Tuesday that its No Filter Tour, originally expected to kick

off in San Diego on May 8, is postponed. The band's tour was also planned to visit some North American cities they haven't played in years, including Cleveland, St. Louis, Austin, Texas, Louisville, Kentucky, Charlotte, North

Carolina and Tampa, Florida.

"We're hugely disappointed to have to postpone the tour. We are sorry to all the fans who were looking forward to it as much as we were, but the health and safety of everyone has to take pri-

ority. We will all get through this together—and we'll see you very soon," the Stones said in a statement.

Tour promoter AEG is advising concertgoers to hold onto their original tickets and wait for more information.

Transgender classmate isn't ready for romance with teen

DEAR ABBY: I'm 16 and have had trouble with romance for as long as I can remember. I've had almost 80 crushes since kindergarten. I counted.

Right now I am close to a relationship with a boy at my school who is a year older. I have had feelings for "Ben" for almost a year, and I found it was mutual a few months ago. He invited me to coffee but later canceled, explaining that he wasn't emotionally prepared, which was clear. He feels the way he does for a reason. Ben is a transgender male, and his mother disapproves, as do many of our classmates.

Two months ago, we agreed to be "just friends ... for now." Since then, no feelings have changed for either of us. However, I know Ben still isn't ready, largely because of his mother's and his classmates' influence.

I'm getting impatient. I've been in relationships before, the middle-school kind, and I know how my brain functions. Right now, I worry obsessively about how he feels. This will subside after a real relationship starts. But before that happens, the issue is all-consuming. I constantly rehash concerns we need to talk about in my mind, and I don't know how to ignore them until we can speak again. It makes my grades suffer.

I blame Ben's mother and classmates for the stress he's under. They're the reason for his dysphoria and panic attacks. I'm angry. I want her to leave her son alone. How can I wait peacefully and get over my bitterness toward his mother?

CRUSHING TEEN IN OHIO

DEAR TEEN: Anger, frustration and bitterness can make people sick. You need to find ways to get your mind off this budding romance and channel these negative emotions, if only because Ben isn't ready for what you have in mind. Bear in mind that he is on a long and complicated journey. (Give him props for honesty.) Then buckle down and concentrate on your schoolwork, find a sport or other activity you can involve yourself in and, if your school doesn't have a Genders and Sexualities Alliance, consider going online to gsanetwork.org and starting one at your school.

DEAR ABBY: I work in the medical field in a family practice. I love my job and helping people, but the problem is, my boss never tells the truth to our patients and overcharges them anytime he gets a chance. The sicker the patient, the more heartless he is with them. He has told some patients that we, the assistants, told him they owe him money.

It has reached a point where I cannot handle it anymore. Knowing that I see everything he does, he now can't stand me and constantly criticizes everything I do. He has become verbally aggressive and abusive.

I know this is unhealthy for me. I have insomnia because of it, and when I do get to sleep, I have nightmares about this situation. Abby, please help me because I do not know what service to contact to make a complaint against him.

SCARED IN GEORGIA

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

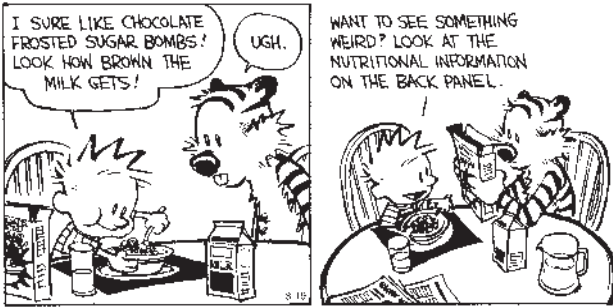


DEAR SCARED: Document everything you have observed. Then talk to your local police about possible fraud being committed by your employer. Next, contact your state medical board and report what has been going on at the expense of the patients. If these patients are senior citizens, reach out to your Area Agency on Aging (aging.georgia.gov/locations), because the "good doctor" may be committing elder abuse, which could land him in the prison system.

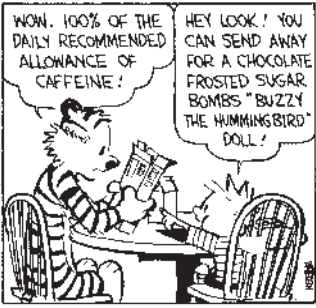
Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

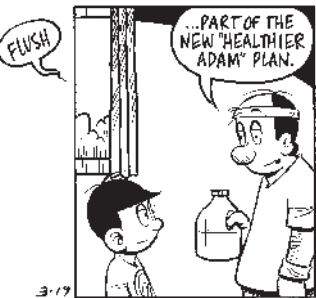
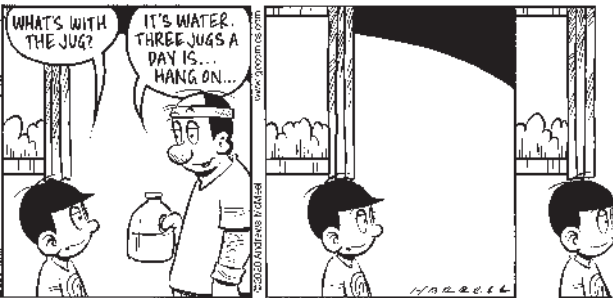
Calvin and Hobbes



Garfield®



Adam@home



The Duplex



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Thailand, once

5 Second-hand

9 Wager

12 Caesar's "Behold!"

13 Poet Teasdale

14 "Am — blame?"

15 Midweek

17 Scooted

18 Sweet drink

19 In a proper way

21 UFO pilot

22 Calendar page

24 Took the train

27 Cornfield noise

28 Tosses in

31 Dos precursor

32 Hostel

33 Sound of relief

34 Rude dude

36 Poetic contraction

DOWN

37 Memory unit

38 Army doc

40 Bell or Barker

41 '70s club

43 Leather-neck

47 German conjunction

48 When you might rent a van

51 Literary collection

52 Love god

53 "Legally Blonde" role

54 Myrna of movies

55 Cozy rooms

56 Conked out

16 Consume

20 School support org.

22 Frenzied

23 Has

24 Barbecue seasoning

25 Lennon's lady

26 Armageddon

27 New York's — Field

29 Not "dis"

30 That woman

35 Fun and games

37 Stormed (in)

39 Like the Capitol

40 Fellow

41 Two-way

42 — uncertain terms

43 Overlook

44 Not busy

45 "The Lion King" lion

46 Ogled

49 Raw rock

50 Otto — Bismarck

Solution time: 24 mins.

D	O	L	R	T	E	A	M	B	A	S			
E	L	S	E	J	S	B	A	E	R	O			
B	E	E	H	O	N	E	Y	H	A	N	D		
T	O	C	A	T	E	S	H	A	R	E	S		
B	I	O	S	E	T	H							
J	A	B	S	J	M	S	M	U	R				
A	L	A	R	T	A	R	A	G	U	A			
W	A	K	E	S	P	E	S	S	G	T			
E	P	T	O		A	R	A						
F	E	D	O	R	A	S	O	P	H	I	E		
R	U	F	R		B	L	O	C	W	H	A	R	D
A	R	A	T		L	E	N		I	Z	O	D	
N	O	M	S		E	S	S		D	E	N	Y	

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: AJ Lee, 33; Bruce Willis, 65; Glenn Close, 73; Ursula Andress, 84.

Happy Birthday: Make a difference this year. Speak up, and you will gain confidence and raise awareness. Set a path that is doable and affordable. Take your time, master your skills and apply them to what you want to accomplish, and positive changes will come your way. Put in the time required to lead to a better future. Your numbers are 6, 15, 24, 29, 34, 41, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Be bold, and step in a direction that's inviting. You may be required to go outside your comfort zone to get the results you want. A little charm will go a long way when you need help. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Time spent learning something new or honing your skills will be spent well. What you gain in knowledge and the connections made while doing so will lead to beneficial partnerships and prosperous ventures. Leave a sensitive matter alone for now. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): It will be challenging to hide your feelings. Emotional outbursts will lead to regret. Put your efforts into something that will occupy your time and mind and keep you out of trouble. Don't make an abrupt change or decision. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Contribute what you have to offer, and you will find yourself in a good position. Positive change is within reach. Reach out with enthusi-

asm, and don't be afraid to embrace the future with open arms. A move looks promising. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Look over your finances before you spend on something that may be out of your reach. Say no to anyone asking for money or help. Emotional discussions will surface if you are involved in a joint venture or share expenses with someone. ★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Try something new and exciting. The people you meet will be entertaining and offer you something interesting to consider. Do more for yourself, and don't feel guilty about having fun. Love is on the rise. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Being jealous or critical will not help you get ahead. Give others the benefit of the doubt if you want the same in return. Concentrate on what you need to do to get ahead, and forget about competing with anyone but yourself. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Keep tight control of your emotions. Don't give anyone the upper hand or knowledge that can make you look bad. Focus on what's important to you and getting ahead. Strangers will be more supportive than family and friends. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Get on with your life. Don't let your emotions lead to temptation, arguments or taking a stubborn position when you should concentrate on doing and being your best. Don't count on outside help. Do the work yourself. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

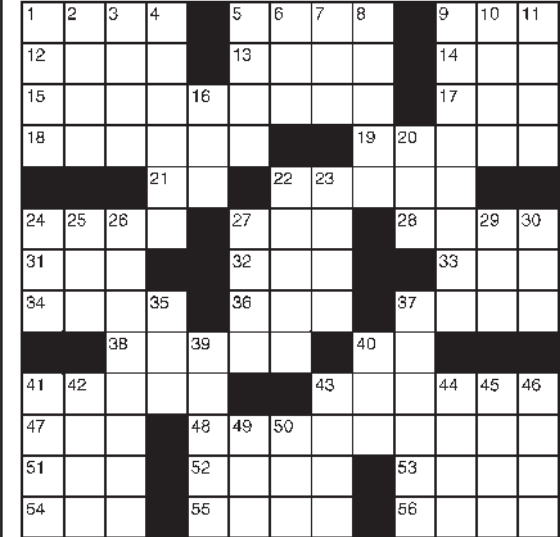
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): A challenge will turn into a healthy competition that allows you to show what you are capable of doing. Address pending financial matters, and you will come out on top. Take control, and you will get your way. Nurture a meaningful relationship. ★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't act on assumptions. Ask questions until you understand what's at stake. Use your ingenuity, and look for reasonable solutions. Don't feel you have to act quickly. You'll gain respect for the results you get, not the speed at which you work. ★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Follow your intuition, not what someone wants you to do. Make decisions that will help you get ahead. If you give someone the upper hand, he or she will take over. Stick to your game plan, and make adjustments that suit you. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You are artistic, appreciative and attentive. You are sincere and kind.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

			4	9				
3		5						7
4	6		3		9			
				4		9	5	
	8					2		
5	7		8					
		3		7		5	1	
8				2			6	
			6	2				

Difficulty Level ★★★

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD By DAVID CUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SWIMMING INSTRUCTORS Solution: 8 letters

E L A H X E T S R I F R O N T
G K C I R B M E F I L A P S E
G C O O S R P A T R O L S U K
B I O R A G D N E P E E D N C
E K L E T C E P U M R A W D A
A G D M D S H L L U P D B E J
T L O A O I T E R J M S A R E
E I W G A T S S F D I D C W C
R D N R G S I T A A W R K A A
E E P O O L S O A E S A C T Q
T D T N T O E I N N R O R E U
T R R A R V D S S O C B A R A
U I O T I M E T O T L E W O T
L L P D A E R T U N S S L L I
F L S E L B B U B O G B U L C

© 2000 King Features Syndicate, Inc. www.wonderword.com 3/19

Aquatic, Arms, Assist, Backcrawl, Board, Breaststroke, Brick, Bubbles, Club, Coach, Cool-down, Deep End, Distance, Dive, Drill, Eggbeater, Exhale, First, Float, Flutter, Front, Game, Glide, Goggles, Jacket, Jump, Kick, Laps, Leads, Legs, Lesson, Life, Motion, Outdoor, Patrols, Pool, Pull, Roll, Safe, Song, Sport, Swim, Time, Towel, Tread, Underwater, Warmup

Yesterday's Answer: Pillow

The NEW Treasury 39 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Durant among 4 Nets positive for COVID-19



NEW YORK
(AP)—Four Brooklyn Nets players, including Kevin Durant, have tested positive for the new coronavirus, bringing the total to seven known players in the NBA.

The Nets did not name the players Tuesday, but Durant told *The Athletic* he was one of them, saying: “Everyone be careful, take care of yourself and quarantine. We’re going to get through this.”

The Nets announced that one player is exhibiting symptoms, while the other three are asymptomatic. All four players have been isolated and are under the care of team physicians.

“The health of our players and staff is of the highest priority to the organization and the team is doing everything within its power to ensure that those affected receive the best care possible,” the Nets said in a statement.

Brooklyn’s most recent game was March 10 in Los Angeles against the Lakers. After the Nets announced their test results, the Lakers—who have the NBA’s second-best record this season and two of the game’s biggest stars in LeBron James and Anthony Davis—indicated that their team will now be tested.

“Given the exposure risks from our game against the Nets on March 10th, we are following the next steps of our COVID-19 procedures and protocol that are established in consultation with various health officials, the NBA and our UCLA Health doctors,” the Lakers said. “The health and well-being of our players, staff, fans, and society in general, is of paramount importance to us, and will continue to be our focus.”

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus.

The Nets said that all players and members of their travel party are being asked to remain isolated and closely monitor their health, but the team’s ability to get testing that has been unavailable to so many others drew criticism from New York Mayor Bill de Blasio.

“We wish them a speedy recovery. But, with all due respect, an entire NBA team should NOT get tested for COVID-19 while there are critically ill patients waiting to be tested,” de Blasio wrote



on Twitter. “Tests should not be for the wealthy, but for the sick.”

NBA spokesman Mike Bass later said that public health officials and team physicians had concerns that players—because of their direct contact with each other and interactions with the general public—could accelerate the spread of the virus.

The NBA’s hope is that the platform its players have will raise awareness among the game’s fan basis on the topic of taking precautions seriously. Several NBA players have taped messages in recent days on the topic; Portland’s Pau Gasol, for example, released one Tuesday thanking first responders for their work on the front lines of the crisis.

“Hopefully, by these players choosing to make their test results public, they have drawn attention to the critical need for young people to follow CDC recommendations in order to protect others, particularly those with underlying health conditions and the elderly,” Bass said.

It is unknown how many teams have been tested.

Brooklyn beat the Lakers in that March 10 matchup. The Nets were then to face the Golden State Warriors two nights later in San Francisco—a game that was to be played without fans because of a decision made by local officials there—before the NBA

season was suspended after Utah’s Rudy Gobert tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. Durant was in Los Angeles for the Nets’ game against the Lakers, but was not in San Francisco for the game against the Warriors, his former club.

“I saw that news,” Warriors coach Steve Kerr said of the Nets’ positive tests while speaking on a conference call. “I’m hoping none of our players went and hung out with guys the night before our game. I don’t know if that’s the case or not.”

Kerr added that he didn’t need to be convinced that suspending the season was the correct decision.

Meanwhile, the NBA’s board of governors met again

Tuesday for what a person familiar with the details of the call categorized as an “update” on the pandemic and the league’s response. Among the speakers addressing team owners was former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, who served during President Barack Obama’s second term and discussed the U.S. response to the virus, according to the person who spoke to *The Associated Press* on condition of anonymity because the call’s details were not released publicly.

Lakers to self-quarantine

This past weekend, LeBron James took sons Bronny and Bryce to the Lakers’ team

facility to share something they often enjoy together—basketball.

It was Saturday, when James was supposed to be preparing for a game against the Denver Nuggets that was scheduled for Sunday amid the best season the Lakers have had in at least a decade. Bronny and his Chatsworth Sierra Canyon High teammates were supposed to play in a state championship basketball game that day.

But all of that changed because the NBA had to suspend the season last Wednesday after Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for the coronavirus, leading sports at every level to do the same. The next day, the league for-

AP
In this Oct. 25, 2019 file photo, injured Brooklyn Nets center Kevin Durant, who is recovering from an Achilles injury, stands and applauds this team’s performance during the first half of an NBA game against the New York Knicks in New York.

bade teams from holding group practices or meetings and prohibited players from leaving their home markets until Monday. Leaders across the country asked citizens to distance themselves from each other to slow the spread of the worldwide pandemic.

The issue became more visibly connected to the Lakers on Tuesday when the Brooklyn Nets, whom the Lakers played March 10 at Staples Center, announced four of their players tested positive for the coronavirus, three without symptoms.

In response to the Nets’ news, the Lakers will give those players who remain in town the opportunity to be tested Wednesday and have asked all of their players to self-quarantine for 14 days, according to people familiar with the situation but not authorized to speak publicly.

The information was relayed to players during a conference call Tuesday, one of several the team has had with players since the league suspended operations. Lakers coach Frank Vogel and vice president of basketball operations Rob Pelinka have had regular conference calls, typically one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

“Given the exposure risks from our game against the Nets on March 10th, we are following the next steps of our COVID-19 procedures and protocol that are established in consultation with various health officials, the NBA and our UCLA Health doctors,” the Lakers said in a statement.

Kerr says USA Basketball still planning for Tokyo 2020

CALIFORNIA—The USA Basketball coaching staff for the Tokyo Olympics is still preparing as if there will be a gold medal to try and defend this summer, even in highly uncertain times caused by the global coronavirus pandemic.

U.S. men’s assistant coach Steve Kerr, the coach of the Golden State Warriors, said on a conference call Tuesday that he has had some recent contact with U.S. head coach Gregg Popovich of the San Antonio Spurs as plans for the Olympics continue.

Kerr is slated to be on a staff that also includes Atlan-

ta Hawks coach Lloyd Pierce and Villanova coach Jay Wright. Those were the three assistants under Popovich last summer as well as the Basketball World Cup in China.

“Everything’s just up in the air,” Kerr said. “There’s no sense of whether things are going to be delayed or anything. We’re all kind of wondering what’s going to happen and so is the rest of the world.”

The Olympics are scheduled to start July 24. The International Olympic Committee said Tuesday that the

uncertainty of things right now is “an unprecedented situation for the whole world.”

“The IOC remains fully committed to the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, and with more than four months to go before the Games there is no need for any drastic decisions at this stage,” the IOC said, adding that any other “speculation at this moment would be counter-productive.”

USA Basketball revealed last month a list of 44 players—most of the league’s biggest American stars among

them and 15 of the 16 U.S.-born NBA All-Stars from this season—who are under consideration for the Olympic team. The original plan was to pick a 12-player roster by early June, and for that team to gather in Las Vegas in early July to begin training camp.

Officially, no part of that plan has changed yet. Like the NBA and the rest of the sports world, USA Basketball is very much in wait-and-see mode.

“We’re just going to plan as if it’s going to happen and we’re going to try to put together a roster,” Kerr said. “That’s all we can do.”



Brady leaving Patriots to join Buccaneers



NEW ENGLAND (AP)—For two decades, Tom Brady was the face of the Patriots, and even of the NFL. When he turns 43 in August, his home address no longer will be in New England.

The six-time Super Bowl champion plans to keep playing. But the centerpiece of the Patriots' dynasty, the most successful quarterback in league history, says he is leaving the only pro team he has ever known.

Brady's representatives were in serious talks with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Brady posted Tuesday on social media "my football journey will take place elsewhere."

The comments were the first to indicate the Patriots icon would leave New England. Statements later by team owner Robert Kraft and coach Bill Belichick made it clear that Brady's remarkable stint there is over.

In a two-part message, Brady thanked the Patriots and the fans and said "FOREVER A PATRIOT."

"I don't know what my football future holds, but it is time for me to open a new stage for my life and my career," he wrote. "Although my football journey will take place elsewhere, I appreciate everything that we have achieved and am grateful for our incredible TEAM experiences."

The one-year contract Brady signed before last season expires Wednesday afternoon, and his agent could negotiate a deal with another team on Tuesday, though it can't be official yet. He will count \$13.5 million toward New England's salary cap due



In this Dec. 15, 2019, file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (12) waves to the crowd after an NFL game against the Cincinnati Bengals in Cincinnati. AP

to the signing bonus money he received in 2019.

Kraft said of Brady: "I had hoped this day would never come, but rather that Tom would end his remarkable career in a Patriots uniform after yet another Super Bowl championship. Unfortunately, the two sides were unable to reach an agreement to allow that dream to become a reality. While sad today, the overwhelming feeling I have is appreciation for his countless contributions to our team and community."

A four-time Super Bowl Most Valuable Player and three-time league MVP, Brady has been the enduring face of

the Patriots during a run that added another layer to Boston's already rich sports history. Only Bill Russell, who won 11 NBA championship rings in the 1950s and '60s with the Celtics, has won more titles as a member of one of New England's four major professional sports teams.

Brady would be the oldest starting quarterback in the league at 43 at the beginning of next season. The Colts, Buccaneers, Chargers and Dolphins are among the teams expected to be in a Brady derby.

"TB12," as he has been dubbed, a nod to his 2017 book detailing his diet and exercise approach, arguably is coming

off his worst non-injury season. He threw for 4,057 yards and 24 touchdowns in 2019, with eight interceptions. But he completed fewer than 56% of his passes six times in the final eight games of the year, including a season-ending loss to Miami that cost the Patriots a first-round playoff bye.

They lost at home to the Titans in the wild-card round, Brady's earliest postseason exit in a decade—and likely his last game in a Patriots uniform.

Brady had a one-year contract for 2019 that paid him \$23 million, placing him 10th among starting quarterbacks. It was the latest renegotiation by Brady to help give the Pa-

triotics salary cap flexibility to fill out the roster.

The chief decision-maker in player personnel decisions, Belichick hasn't been shy about moving on from players he felt were past their prime or seeking contracts that exceeded value in relation to their age. Belichick has severed ties with players much younger than Brady during his time in New England.

"Nothing about the end of Tom's Patriots career changes how unfathomably spectacular it was," said Belichick, whose current quarterback is untested second-year player Jarrett Stidham. "With his relentless competitiveness and longevity, he earned everyone's adoration and will be celebrated forever. It has been a privilege to coach Tom Brady for 20 years."

After franchising offensive lineman Joe Thuney and coming to terms on new deals with Matt Slater and Devin McCourty, the Patriots have only about \$18 million in salary cap space.

Driskel to Broncos; Rivers moves to Colts

The Denver Broncos have found Drew Lock's backup.

A person with knowledge of the deal tells The Associated Press that the Broncos have agreed to a two-year contract with veteran free agent quarterback Jeff Driskel.

In other transactions, the Indianapolis Colts made a bold move, agreeing to a deal with Philip Rivers to be their next quarterback.

The contract is just for one year, according to ESPN's

Adam Schefter. The deal is worth about \$25 million.

Delaying approval of free agent deals

The NFL is considering delaying the approval of free agent deals being made the last two days because of a lack of signed contracts.

A person familiar with the discussions on Tuesday night tells The Associated Press that due to free agents not being able to travel and actually sign agreements, which is league policy, the deals might not be confirmed by teams Wednesday when the NFL's business season begins. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because such discussions are not made public.

The league has banned travel for players and team personnel as a safeguard against the new coronavirus, and has advised clubs that physical exams can only be taken locally by free agents who reach deals.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus.

Dozens of agreements have been reached Monday and Tuesday in what's known as the approved tampering period. Players' representatives have been allowed to negotiate with teams, though nothing official can be done until 4 p.m. EDT on Wednesday.

Now, that could be delayed.

Virus forces French Open delay; US Open switch 'possibility'

The French Open was postponed for about four months because of the coronavirus pandemic, shifting from May to September and juggling the tennis calendar.

The French tennis federation said Tuesday it will hold its 15-day clay-court event at Roland Garros in Paris from Sept. 20 to Oct. 4, instead of May 24 to June 7, "to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved in organizing the tournament."

In the statement announcing the move, federation President Bernard Giudicelli described it as "a difficult yet brave decision in this unprecedented situation." Later, in a conference call with reporters, Giudicelli acknowledged the other Grand Slam tournaments and the men's and women's professional

tours were informed of the change—but not consulted.

"It's unthinkable for us to remove Roland Garros from the calendar. The only thing we had in mind is the interests of the tournament, of the players," Giudicelli said. "We looked at the fortnight that was least damaging for the other (tournaments)."

The French Open's new dates place it right after the hard-court U.S. Open, which currently is scheduled to be held in New York from Aug. 31 to Sept. 13. Having just one week between two major championships, played on different surfaces, would be unusually short.

The U.S. Tennis Association said later Tuesday it is considering "the possibility" of postponing the U.S. Open

because of the outbreak.

In a not-so-veiled jab at the French federation, the USTA issued a statement saying that if there were a change in timing, "we recognize that such a decision should not be made unilaterally."

The USTA added that it would only move its major championship "in full consultation" with others, including Grand Slam organizers, the WTA and ATP tours and the International Tennis Federation.

The new timeline for the French Open also conflicts with several hard-court tournaments already slated for those two weeks, as well as the Laver Cup exhibition event in Boston.

Laver Cup organizers said they were taken by surprise, and noted their event was al-

ready sold out.

"It raises many questions. At this time, we want our fans, sponsors, broadcasters, staff, volunteers, players and the great city of Boston to know that we intend to hold Laver Cup 2020 as currently scheduled," the organizers said in a statement.

This is the first instance of a Grand Slam tournament being affected by the virus that has spread around the world. The next major tennis championship on the calendar is Wimbledon, which is to start in late June in England.

After the French Open's postponement was announced, Richard Lewis, the chief executive of the All England Club, which runs Wimbledon, said his group was continuing to plan for that tournament "at this time."



MLB teams pledge \$30M support for employees

NEW YORK (AP)—Major League Baseball's teams have pledged \$30 million for ballpark workers who will lose income because of the delay to the season caused by the new coronavirus.

Commissioner Rob Manfred made the announcement Tuesday, a day after pushing back opening day to mid-May at the earliest.

"Over the past 48 hours, I have been approached by representatives of all 30 clubs to help assist the thousands of ballpark employees affected by the delay," Manfred said in a statement. "Motivated by desire to help some of the most valuable members of the baseball community, each club has committed \$1 million."

Many ballpark employees are paid by the game and will not have that income during the delay. If the schedule is cut, their income likely would be reduced.

"Our game-day staff are the familiar faces that our fans know and love," Tampa Bay Rays president Brian Auld said. "They are part of the fab-



ric of the ballpark experience at Tropicana Field, and they are an essential part of our operations."

Seattle announced the creation of a fund to support Mariners event staff. The fund will be held within the club's charitable organization Mariners Care and will be given out as grants to the impacted staff, team president Kevin Mather said.

"It's the right thing to do," Mather said. "This commu-

nity has always been so generous. Our ownership group has always been so generous that we think this will be the seed money, for lack of a better word."

The first cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. were in the Seattle area, and Mather said the club started planning contingencies for the possible loss of games a couple of weeks ago. He anticipates Seattle's fund for ballpark workers will exceed

the \$1 million the league said each team would commit.

"The individual clubs will be announcing more details surrounding this support effort in their local communities," Manfred said. "The timing of these announcements will vary because of the need to coordinate with state and local laws as well as collective bargaining obligations in an effort to maximize the benefits realized by each group of employees."

^{AP} Matt Kirmer, left, and Joe Lieser, right, both of Torrance, California, ride scooters past Scottsdale Stadium, the spring training home of the San Francisco Giants, in Scottsdale, Ariz., Saturday, March 14, 2020.

Verlander has surgery on groin

In Houston, Astros ace Justin Verlander had surgery on his right groin Tuesday and is expected to be out about six weeks.

General manager James Click made the announcement. The timing gives Verlander time to heal before opening day, which had been pushed back to mid-May at the earliest because of the new coronavirus.

Verlander dealt with the problem early in spring training. His first start was delayed until March 3 because of discomfort in his right groin. He

made two starts pitching 4 2/3 innings with a 3.86 ERA.

Verlander left his second start on March 8 with a mild strain of a back muscle and said at the time that it would be unlikely that he would be able to start the scheduled March 26 opener against the Los Angeles Angels.

Click said the Astros first thought Verlander could recover from the groin injury with physical therapy.

"After a recent setback in his rehab, the medical staff recommended that a surgical procedure was necessary," Click said.

Verlander, who won the AL Cy Young Award last season, has made each of his scheduled starts for the Astros since he was acquired from Detroit in August 2017. Verlander was 21-6 with a 2.58 ERA last season and led the majors in wins and innings (223).

KONQER Saipan and Rota postponed

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the KONQER obstacle course events on Saipan and Rota will both be postponed indefinitely, according to KONQER chief experience officer Kaz Endo.

"As governments around the world work

toward containment and mitigation of COVID-19, events globally have been cancelled," said Endo. "And, unfortunately, this also means that KONQER events on both Saipan and Rota will not move forward as normally scheduled, as Marianas Visitors Authority reviews the total effects that this pandemic has on the local economies. When the world phases towards a recovery period (post-COVID-19), count on KONQER to help the NMI and our region to step up and help bring back the smiles and confidence the best way we know how —with wellness through play."

Interested participants are encouraged to check konqersports.com for the latest updates of any event rescheduling once large gatherings are safe to re-

sume. KONQER Sports will honor all refund requests to anyone that has already registered for either event.

"While Kaz and I are certainly bummed to cancel any of our events, we do understand that cancellation is the responsible

course of action at this time in order to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible," KONQER president Kelli Wedd said. "We wish everyone health and wellness in the days ahead, and look forward to welcoming everyone to a KONQER event in the near future!"

Currently, KONQER Guam set for Aug. 23 and KONQER Palau slated for Jan. 9 and 10 (2021) are moving forward as scheduled. Early bird registration rates will be extended to July 31 for Guam and Oct. 31 for Palau, and registration is currently open at konqersports.com.

For more information on KONQER and the 2020-2021 circuit schedule, visit konqersports.com. (PR)



MP

From Page 24

ers delivered two goals apiece. Kaithlyn Chavez scored first in the third minute and got her second goal in the 34th, while Monico Claridades earned his goals in the 32nd and 65th minute. Sernante Jimenez duplicated his two teammates' feats after finding the back of the net in the 44th and 70th minute, while Mark Ryan Costales and Tamia Hix chipped in one goal apiece.

BOYS U19 TanHoldings 4, NMI U15 0

TanHoldings also prevailed in the first game in the boys U19

division last Friday after dominating the NMI Boys U15 National Team.

Mark Esalan starred in TanHoldings' easy win after firing three goals, which came in succession, as the forward

scored in the fourth, 17th, and 28th minute. Oliver Fajardo finished the job for TanHoldings with his goal in the 65th minute.

With the victory, TanHoldings is still breathing down

Kanoa 1's neck, as the former has two wins against the latter's three.

Kanoa 1 12, Kanoa 2 2

Kanoa 2 is still unbeaten this season following a demolition of Kanoa 2 in the second game in the division.

Kanoa opened an 8-0 lead in the first half en route to the lopsided victory.

Andruw Omelau led Kanoa's triumph after recording five goals, while Jaydee Jose added two, and Daniel Mar Pablo, Jim and Ian Maniango, Ian Lubao, and Merrick Toves made one apiece.

The winless Kanoa 2 got its pair of goals from John Thongaram and John Mark Anastacio.

2020 NMIFA Spring Youth League

TEAM STANDINGS (As of March 18, 2020)

CO-ED U13 DIVISION

CLUB	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
TanHoldings	4	0	0	23	7	16	12
MP United	3	0	1	25	6	19	9
Matansa	1	1	2	21	17	4	4
Shirley's	1	0	3	6	25	-19	3
Kanoa	0	1	3	9	29	-20	1

BOYS U19 DIVISION

CLUB	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Kanoa 1	3	1	0	20	6	14	10
TanHoldings	2	2	0	19	3	16	8
MP United	2	1	1	27	4	23	7
NMI U15	1	0	3	8	17	-9	3
Kanoa 2	0	0	4	2	46	-44	0

MHS

From Page 24

in the finals (6:51.66). Saipan Southern finished second in the prelims with a time of 7:07.08, more than 20 seconds faster than Kagman (7:28.51). In the finals, The Lady Ayuyus and Lady Rays switched places with Kagman registering 6:52.50, way ahead of Saipan Southern's 7:21.48.

The newly crowned Lady Dolphins had Ma. Victoria Camama and Marizel Hiponia as coaches, while members of the team include Kristina Achas, Tianna Aldan, Alexandra Dalusung, Gabrielle Mario, Jenisha Dubral, Vinaiei and Veralei Hapdei, Julia Malate, Raylyn Singa, Ivanna Velasquez, De-



Kagman High School paddlers navigate a turn during the 1,000m race in the waters off Kili Beach in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series last Saturday.

izha Ythemar, Deanna Kapileo, Rita Cepeda, and Sarah Calage.

MHS started the competition on a wrong foot after getting only a point in the 500m

races last Feb. 22. In the 1,000m prelims and finals, the Dolphins bagged 8 markers and then 5 in the long distance race last Feb. 29 after

placing second to Kagman. In the third leg, MHS was all business and ruled all four events to earn 20 points and grab the lead from Kagman.

ROSELYN B. MONROY

KANOA

From Page 24

hapless Victory, 17-0.

TanHoldings was on target both in the first and second half to wallop Victory and remain undefeated in three games for the solo lead in the division.

Martin Jambor powered TanHoldings to the lopsided victory after delivering five goals, while Mark Esalan contributed four.

In the first game in Division A, All Blue edged out Paire, 1-0.

Brian Lubao drilled the game winner with just six min-

utes left in the game, giving All Blue its second triumph while handing Paire its first defeat in the season, which is suspended indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, Shirley's outclassed Island Star, 2-0, in the lone Division B match played last Sunday.

Lalaine Pagarao knocked in the twin goals for Shirley's with her first posted in the 28th minute and the second in the 37th.

Shirley's got its second victory, while Island Star absorbed its second loss.



**Durant among
4 Nets positive
for COVID-19**

PAGE 21

Saipan Tribune Sports

**Brady leaving
Patriots to join
Buccaneers**

PAGE 22



24 THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

MHS paddlers stand out

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Marianas High School paddlers lead Saipan Southern High School during the 1,000m race in the waters off Kilili Beach in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series last Saturday.



By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Marianas High School went all out in the last leg of the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series to clinch the girls division championship.

The Lady Dolphins, who had a so-so performance in the kick-off, nearly swept the

500m and 1,000m preliminary and final races in the waters off Kilili Beach last Saturday to

finish the four-part series with 68 points and beat Kagman High School (48) and Saipan

Southern High School (35).

The MHS female paddlers, before last weekend's events, were ahead by only 8 points against Kagman, 32-24. The Lady Dolphins then won the 1,000m prelims and finals races to get 20 points, as double points were at stake in the last leg. In the 500m race, MHS was ranked second in the pre-

lims and first in the finale.

There was a close race in the 500m prelims with Kagman timing in at 3:36.52 against MHS' 3:17.65, while Saipan Southern submitted 3:23.35. In the finals, the Lady Dolphins and Lady Ayuyus figured in another tight competition with the former this

time reaching shore first after checking in at 3:19.75 against the latter's 3:20.39.

At far third were the Lady Rays, who recorded 3:27.20.

In the 1,000m races, MHS logged 7:00.01 in the prelims before posting a faster time

See MHS on Page 23

MP United crushes Shirley's

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

MP United Football Club routed Shirley's Football Club, 6-0, in their co-ed U13 division game in the 2020 NMIFA

Spring Youth League last Saturday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Ian Song lifted MP United to its third win in four games after making a hat trick. He



registered his three goals in streak with the first one coming in the 23rd minute and the last two in the 30th and 37th minute.

William Sosa, Miles Linden, and William Lee were the other scorers for MP United with the former starting things out for the team with his goal in the seventh minute. Linden hit the board in the ninth minute, while Lee converted a shot in the 17th, helping MP United keep the No. 2 spot in the team standings behind the unbeaten TanHoldings Football Club.

TanHoldings took with No. 4 after outgunning Matansa, 8-5.

It was a team effort for TanHoldings, as three of its play-

See MP on Page 23

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MP United Football Club's William Lee, right, steps in to steal possession from Matansa Football Club's Javen Camacho during an earlier co-ed U13 division game in the 2020 NMIFA Spring Youth League at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.



Kanoa, TanHoldings shut down foes

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Kanoa Football Club and TanHoldings Football Club blanked their respective opponents in Division A of the 2020 Spring Men's M-League last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center

in Koblerville.

Kanoa played in the last match of the night and shut down Old B Bank, 3-0, for its second straight win.

Three different players made it to the board for Kanoa with Andruw Omelau, Ian Maniago, and Joseph Rasa scoring one apiece. Omelau drew first blood for Kanoa with his shot in the

65th minute, while Maniago found his target in the 72nd, and Rasa closed out for the squad 12 minutes later.

With Kanoa downing the Old B Bank, the latter is still winless this season.

In the match preceding the Kanoa-Old B Bank, TanHoldings pounced on the

See KANOA on Page 23

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

TanHoldings Football Club's Thai-phi Austria surveys the field first before kicking the ball during their Division A game against Victory in the 2020 Spring Men's M-League last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

